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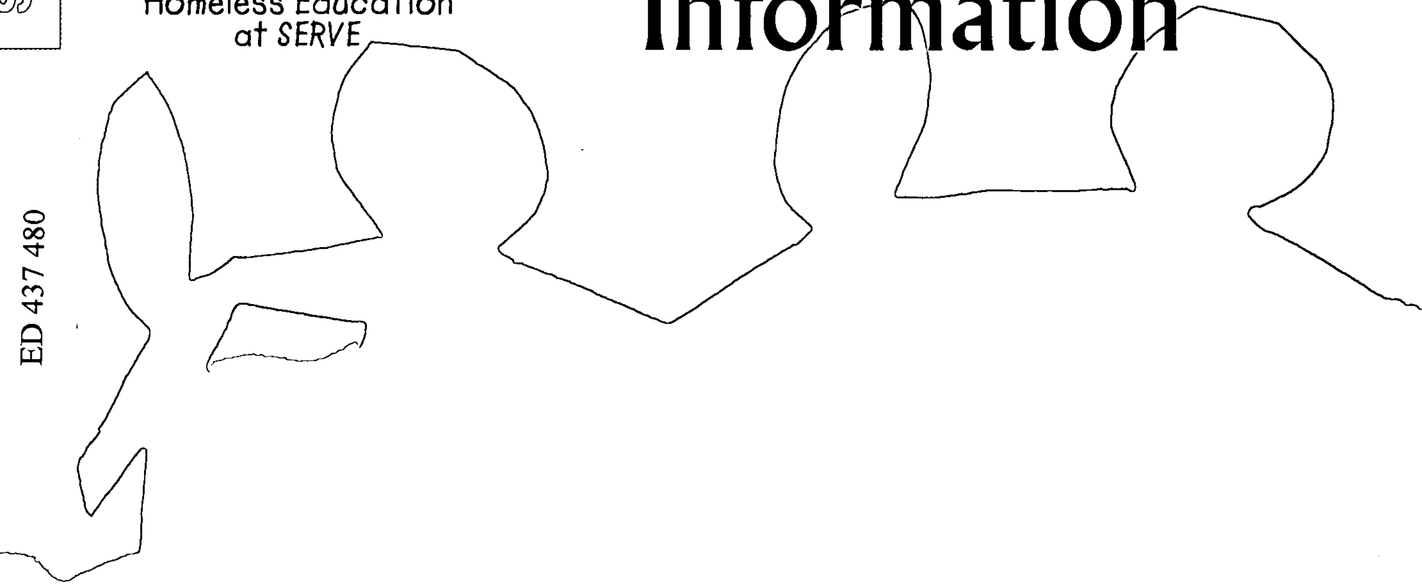
ABSTRACT

This publication provides current research and related literature on issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth. It includes a variety of perspectives, reflecting the most recent trends in homelessness, determined by changes in policies, economics, and demographics. It also offers the latest research and scholarly opinions from the fields of psychology, sociology, child and family development, and education on the effects of homelessness on children. Section 1 provides an overview of issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth, reviewing legislative and policy issues and discussing educational considerations, family connections, and community support services. Section 2 includes actual reprints of articles by experts on educating homeless children and youth. Section 3 provides an annotated bibliography of articles, chapters, books, and reports. The resources are organized alphabetically by author. Section 4 presents legislation: the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Individual sections contain references. (SM)

SPECIAL REPORT

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth: A Compendium of Research & Information



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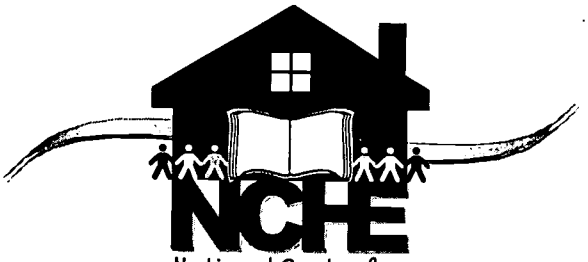

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Please note a correction to page 111: The phone number listed for the U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program is (202) 260-0826.

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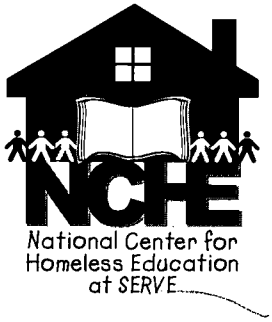

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Table of Contents

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) was established at SERVE to provide critical information to those who need it to remove barriers to education and to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth across the nation. The goals of the NCHE are

- To disseminate important resource and referral information related to the complex issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth
- To foster collaboration among various organizations with an interest in addressing the education of homeless students
- To promote national grassroots awareness of homelessness and homeless education issues

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Foreword

For over a decade, researchers, policymakers, service providers, and educators have addressed homelessness and provided information to guide communities in meeting the needs of homeless families and individuals. Much public attention has focused in particular on homeless children and youth–the fastest-growing population of homeless individuals.

Although many states and communities have developed programs and policies to meet the needs of homeless children and families, these efforts have only scratched the surface of a pervasive, growing, and overwhelmingly misunderstood problem. There is so much that needs to be done.

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth: A Compendium of Research and Information provides current research and related literature on issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth. The *Compendium* includes a variety of perspectives, reflecting the most recent trends in homelessness, determined by changes in policies, economics, and demographics. The *Compendium* also offers the latest research and scholarly opinion from the fields of psychology, sociology, child and family development, and education on the effects of homelessness on children.

Readers who want to learn about educating homeless children and youth and readers who want to update their knowledge on the issues will find a wealth of information in the *Compendium.* Section I of the publication, an introductory primer, provides an overview of the issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth. To enable readers to explore the topics in the primer more fully, Section II includes actual reprints of articles by experts on educating homeless children and youth. Section III provides an annotated bibliography of articles, chapters, books, and reports.

The resources are organized alphabetically by author. However, for readers interested in a particular topic, matrices that precede Sections II and III enable them to select readings that address specific themes and issues. A reader may select from the following topics:

- Background information
- Legal and policy issues
- Educational support
- Family connections
- Community support structures

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth: A Compendium of Research and Information is an important publication for anyone involved in increasing educational access and success for homeless children and youth.

–National Center for Homeless Education

SECTION ONE

Introduction and Overview of Issues

Organization of the *Compendium*

This introductory primer was intended to provide the reader with an overview of the issues surrounding the education of homeless children and youth. To explore the topics introduced more fully, Section Two of the *Compendium* provides actual reprints of articles, followed by Section Three's annotated bibliography of articles, chapters, books, and reports.

Setting the Stage

Why was this *Compendium* Created?

During the past two decades, large numbers of children have experienced homelessness. Despite media coverage, advocacy efforts, and the passage of federal legislation to protect the educational rights of homeless children and youth, what happens at the schoolhouse door and beyond is often subject to chance rather than consistent application of policies and procedures. Many educators remain unaware of their special responsibilities to educate this population of students and lack the knowledge to support homeless students in their schools and classrooms. Before the educational rights and needs of homeless children and youth can be met, educators must have tools to gain the awareness and understanding of this population of students. This *Compendium* was created as one such tool—to build awareness and provide resources to enhance educators' knowledge of homeless students.

Who is Considered Homeless?

The stereotype of homelessness is often the "bag lady" or single man living on the street. However, since the early 1980's, there has been an alarming rise in family homelessness not witnessed in the United States since the Great Depression (McChesney, 1993) with homeless children now comprising the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population (The National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998, p. 1). Homelessness can range from acute and short-lived through chronic homelessness associated with extreme poverty. The causes of homelessness include lack of affordable housing and a minimum wage that places the working poor at great risk should a crisis arise (for example, job loss or illness). Domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, and even natural disasters can create conditions that lead to homelessness. In addition, changes in the economy have placed many families in precarious housing situations, and it is not uncommon to hear a homeless parent say, "I never thought it could happen to me."

Definitions vary among social agencies and studies on homelessness that have been conducted. For educational purposes, the definition of homeless provided in the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-77) and amended by P.L. 101-645 and P.L. 103-382 prevails. The McKinney Act defines a homeless person as one whose nighttime residence is

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill)
- A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (for example, cars, campgrounds, motels, and other temporary places)
- A doubled-up accommodation (that is, sharing housing with other families or individuals due to loss of housing or other similar situations)

Even when schools are knowledgeable of the rights of homeless students to a free, appropriate public education and are willing to be supportive, recognizing who is homeless remains a challenge. Parents may be reluctant to share information about their homeless condition due to their discomfort with their current living situation, fears that their children will not be accepted in the school or may be stigmatized by thoughtless remarks, and fears that they may lose their children to protective services and be seen as "unfit" parents. The following is a listing of possible signs that could indicate a child is homeless:

- History of attending many schools
- Hunger and hoarding of food

- Hostility and anger
- Needy behavior (seeking attention) or withdrawn behavior
- Poor hygiene and grooming
- Lack of preparation for class
- Inadequate clothing or clothing inappropriate for the weather
- Sleeping in class

While the signs in this list could indicate many other at-risk students, they provide a basis for further exploration and discussion. Educators should demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, and respect when approaching parents, offering assurances that homelessness does not require a referral to protective services, and providing needed resources and assistance in identifying other support services the family may need.

What is the Incidence of Homelessness?

People experiencing homelessness can become almost invisible to mainstream American society and are among the most difficult to count. The reality of their living arrangements defies traditional census strategies, especially for youth without guardians. Rather than actual counts, only estimates are possible. While we may not know precisely how many homeless children and youth there are, we do know that it is a large and apparently growing population (Burt, 1996). Homeless students are not confined to urban areas and can be found in large cities, small towns, suburban communities, and rural areas, alike.

The McKinney Act requires state coordinators to conduct a child estimate once every three years. These data are reported to the United States Department of Education (USED, 1998) and have shown increases in the estimated numbers of homeless students during the last several years. Table 1 provides a summary of the numbers of school-age homeless children and youth reported, including school enrollment figures, reported by the states.

As presented in Table 1, the USED estimated there were approximately 272,000 school-age children in the homeless population in 1989, based on reports from the 50 states and U.S. territories. In 1998 (the most recent period for which data are available), an estimate from the Department reported approximately 608,000 school-age homeless stu-

Table 1
Numbers and School Enrollment of Homeless Students

Year	Numbers of Homeless Students	Percentage of Students Not Attending School
1989	272,773	28%
1991	327,416	20%
1993	744,266[1]	23%
1998	615,336[2]	45%[3]

[1] Hurricane Andrew and other natural disasters may have impacted the particularly high 1993 count.

[2] Five states and the District of Columbia did not submit reports and may account for the lower 1998 count.

[3] Prior to 1998, data were reported for students not attending school; 1998 data were reported for students not attending school on a regular basis; however, this was not operationalized for the states.

dents. In addition to the "not attending school" data reported for 1998, the USED also reported data that 12 percent of K-12 students were not enrolled in school. In 1998, 205,749 preschool homeless children also were reported, with approximately 21 percent enrolled in pre-school programs. These numbers may be an underestimate because counts/estimates tend to miss students who do not stay in shelters (Anderson, Jager, & Panton, 1995) as well as adolescent homeless youth who are not likely to access social services (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993).

Why is Education Important?

Education continues to be viewed as a critical element in breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Schools can provide a safe haven of consistency and caring for children whose lives are marked by danger and uncertainty. Imagine a child dismayed when it is time to end a weekend trip. When asked what he liked so much, he responds, "You can see the sky from here" (Salz & Trubowitz, 1992). Educators can open doors to possibilities and futures–to dreams and accomplishments for children whose lives have been restricted and confined.

> The child's classroom may be the only place where the child can experience quiet, interact with children his/her age, and experience success.... School is the most *normal* activity that most children experience collectively.... For homeless children, it is much more than a learning environment. It is a place of safety, personal space, friendships, and support. (Oakley & Kling, in press)

Who's Holding the Door Open?

A Review of Legislative and Policy Issues

Children and youth experiencing homelessness have many basic needs that have traditionally overshadowed educational needs. However, many believe that education is a key to breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty (Nunez, 1994). The first step in meeting any child's educational needs is access. This section will explore the relationship of policy issues across jurisdictional levels related to the enrollment and participation of homeless children and youth in school.

Federal Jurisdiction: The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

Traditionally, the primary responsibility for education has belonged to the states. Federal involvement in educational policy may occur when inequities are discovered in the provision of a free, appropriate education. The courts and Congress, relying on the 14th Amendment's charge of equal protection under the law, have taken a stand on racial segregation and the provision of an education to students with disabilities. Similarly, inequities were noted for homeless children's access to schooling. During the mid-1980's, it was estimated that more than half of homeless students were not in school, leading to federal intervention.

Nunez (1996) cited changes in fiscal policies in the 1980's as a cause for the dramatic increase in homelessness during that decade. Homelessness doubled in less than a five-year period. Of great concern, was the dramatic increase in the number of families with children who had no adequate shelter. No longer was the stereotype of the single

male "hobo" reflective of the typical homeless individual. In response, Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987 (P.L. 100-77). While much of the Act addressed emergency needs, it included a section on education and targeted a small portion of funding toward school-age children. The educational portion of the Act (Subtitle B–Education for Homeless Children and Youth) required that

1) Homeless students would have access to a free, appropriate public education consistent with education that would be provided to the children of a resident of the state and consistent with the state school attendance laws

2) In any state that had residency requirement as a component of its compulsory school attendance laws, the state was to review and undertake steps to revise such laws to ensure that homeless students were afforded a free and appropriate public education (42 USC 11431)

In an effort to clarify the right of homeless students to enjoy the full range of educational programs that their regularly housed peers enjoyed, specific academic and educational support services to which homeless students are entitled were identified in the Act.

The Act was revised and reauthorized in 1990 to include preschool children. Another key revision in the legislation was a stronger requirement that states review and undertake steps to revise "other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or *success* in school of homeless children and homeless youth" [Section 721 (2)] (emphasis added). Based on these changes, it is clear that congressional intent expanded from *access* to *success* in school (Helm, 1993; Stronge, 1993).

In 1994, the McKinney Act was further amended and incorporated into the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (P.L.103-382). This allowed states to incorporate the McKinney Act requirements in consolidated state plans with other eligible federal programs "to improve teaching and learning by encouraging greater cross-program coordination, planning, and service delivery; enhance integration of programs with educational activities carried out with state and local funds; and promote the state educational goals for all students while effectively meeting the needs of the programs' intended beneficiaries" (U.S. Department of Education, 1995, pp. 4-5). For homeless education, this change in the federal law is designed to provide homeless students with greater access to other federally supported educational programs (for example, Title I, Compensatory Education). Moreover, the law shifted emphasis to higher expectations for student outcomes, increased coordination with other agencies, and more rigorous evaluation of program outcomes (Stronge, 1997; Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1999). Particular activities described in the Act [Section 723(d)] that are intended to facilitate access and success include those noted in Table 2 (adapted from Stronge, in press).

Throughout the versions of the McKinney Act, one constant requirement has been state responsibility to review enrollment policies and revise them if they create barriers for homeless children. Federal responsibility has included modest funding support to states to establish a state coordinator for homeless education and the awarding of small grants to local education agencies, technical assistance to state coordinators, and monitoring and evaluation of state programs (James, Lopez, Murdock, Rouse, & Walker, 1997).

Among the most common barriers that have denied or delayed access are residency requirements, immunization records, birth certificates, and proof of guardianship. Since homeless families are often dealing with multiple crises, it is common that records required by schools may be difficult to locate. The McKinney Act requires states to ensure that such requirements do not prevent or delay homeless students in their efforts to enroll in school.

State Jurisdiction: Enrollment Policies

While the needs of homeless children have provided strong impetus for federal involvement, other forces come into play as one looks at the interpretation and implementation of this federal policy at the state and local levels. States may require that the person enrolling a pupil for the first time submit a certified copy of the pupil's birth record or

Table 2
Summary of Key Provisions of the McKinney Act

Key Provisions	Examples of Applicable Services and Programs
Educational Services	• Tutoring and mentoring • Before-, after-, and summer school programs • Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs • Expedited educational evaluations • Parent education and training programs
Coordination of Services	• Ensuring homeless students access to appropriate existing services (for example, early childhood programs, special education programs, talented and gifted programs, vocational education, and school meals programs) • Coordinating with existing programs (for example, Head Start, programs for adolescents, and housing agencies) • Paying costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring school records
Professional Development	• Raising awareness among educators and the community • Providing specific training for educators
Transportation	• Paying the excess cost of transporting homeless students to school
School Supplies	• Providing school supplies to students • Providing supplies for non-school facilities that operate educational programs
Extraordinary or Emergency Assistance	• Providing other support, as necessary, to enroll and retain homeless students in school

submit an affidavit explaining the absence of such record and present information sufficient to reasonably estimate the child's age. Additionally, proof of a comprehensive physical examination and appropriate immunizations may be required. Children eligible for free public schools may be required to *reside* within the school division. These are precisely the types of barriers referenced in the McKinney Act.

Among the least amenable barriers are those that may conflict with health and safety issues, such as guardianship and immunizations. Practitioners, as an additional hurdle, have cited conflict between the requirements of the McKinney Act and state and federal agencies on these issues. Such barriers currently are addressed by dissemination of non-regulatory guidance on best practice (James, et al., 1997).

In 1987, the disturbing increase in the number of homeless individuals moved Congress to action. Advocates from large cities and areas of extreme poverty across the nation were able to make their case. The low incidence of homelessness in more affluent areas and the lack of awareness there,

however, may lessen the sense of urgency and delay the implementation of changes the McKinney Act requires. This becomes evident when implementation of the Act is viewed at the local level.

At the Schoolhouse Door

Local school divisions establish their enrollment policies, which must conform to federal and state requirements. A case study reflecting these challenges can be found from one state's findings from the 1997 homeless education child estimate. While conducting the homeless child estimate in the spring of 1997, responses were received from 92 percent of the state's school districts. Local education agencies (LEAs) reported that less than half had any policy related to the enrollment of homeless students and youth. Many of those LEAs that did respond were referring to generic enrollment policies with no mention of homeless considerations, assuming that homeless students should be enrolled using the same criteria. Even LEAs with a statement recognizing the need to serve homeless students often lacked specific procedures to ensure the policy was carried out.

In such a situation, policy is often made at the front desk, dependent upon the skill and training of building-level personnel. How closely an individual school complies with federal direction on the enrollment of homeless children and youth varies greatly. It ranges from sensitivity and commitment to total lack of awareness. More than half of the LEAs in this 1997 case study who responded to the survey indicated they did not have any homeless children in their districts. Countering some of these claims were surveys from shelters located in the same school division who had served hundreds of children!

Ajar or Flung Open?

The policy for ensuring the enrollment of homeless children and youth defined in the McKinney Act has been unevenly applied and implemented. Statutes related to school enrollment at the state level have begun to acknowledge the need to consider these students and the family's ability to meet current criteria, yet only one state, Illinois, has written a state-level version of the McKinney Act. Local policy ranges from silence on the issue to written policy backed up by systematic procedures for implementation.

Lack of awareness seems to play a large role in the frequently nonexistent policy at the local level. A middle-class perspective may inhibit communities from viewing enrollment criteria as being biased or in any way barriers for students. Lack of information and training for staff—alerting them to the difficulties homeless children may face when trying to enter school—may add to unintentional insensitivity. In addition, parents may not wish to reveal their homeless situation to schools or may not attempt to enroll their children assuming they would not have the necessary documents. It is likely that parents do not realize they have protections.

This silence, resulting from lack of knowledge and communication, places few demands on the policy-making structures at the local level. Therefore, the fruition of the McKinney Act's policies often rests in the hands of the secretary or principal holding the handle of the school's door.

Educational Considerations

Access and Success

Homelessness is associated with a number of risks including poverty, underemployment, unemployment, adolescent parenting, substance abuse, family violence, child abuse, inadequate job preparation, and illiteracy (Stronge, 1997).

> These stressors have serious consequences for developing children and youth because every year spent in poverty reduces by two percentage points a child's chances of finishing school by age 19. (Children's Defense Fund, 1995, p. 92)

> Because level of school attainment is the best predictor of subsequent employment and economic stability (Entwisle, 1993), fostering successful school participation is fundamental to improving adult outcomes for homeless children and youth. (Reed-Victor & Pelco, 1999)

As discussed under "Legal and Policy Issues," access to school begins with enrollment. Potential barriers such as immunizations, physical exams, birth certificates, proof of guardianship, residency requirements, and transportation continue to slow student enrollment, despite the requirements of the McKinney Act. State laws and local policies and procedures continue to need review and revision, and school personnel require professional development to implement chosen procedures effectively. Outreach and awareness-building must address homeless families, school administrators, school support staff, teachers, and all students (Stronge, in press).

Beyond the issues of legislation, policy, and access are the elements that increase the likelihood of success for homeless students. The first element is acceptance. Too many stories can be told of children entering a school with a parent to enroll and being told they didn't belong there. Imagine how it must feel to be such a child in an unknown place. In addition to facing the uncertainties of daily living, the one place that may provide a predictable routine tells the child that he is not wanted. Office staff (such as secretaries, principals, attendance officers, and bus drivers) are among the first contacts students have with schools. "Their initial welcome is essential to establishing positive connections and setting the stage for smooth school entry and ongoing participation" (Reed-Victor & Pelco, 1999, p. 61).

In addition to acceptance, the classroom must provide an environment that includes understanding. Teachers and students should have knowledge of homelessness that builds empathy and sensitivity. Homeless families do not fit a blanket stereotype but reflect a broad range of conditions, causes, and special needs. Homeless students and their families must be viewed with an eye to their uniqueness as individuals rather than as an "undifferentiated mass" (Stronge, in press). Curricula have been developed to explain homelessness that can be integrated into existing academic standards (for example, *Homelessness: A Resource Guide*, developed by the Iowa Department of Education). In addition, this building of understanding may need to move beyond the school and include the broader community, including parents of non-homeless children (Stronge, in press).

Creating a climate of acceptance and understanding of homeless students is not unlike the philosophy of inclusive practices in special education. The goal is belonging–possibly a foreign concept to students whose lives have little stability or "roots." The feelings expressed by the administrator quoted below apply to students experiencing homelessness as well as those with disabilities and offer educators a view of what an accepting, understanding, inclusive school and classroom would offer:

I look at the word *inclusion*, and I just think of what it says—that a child can be included in the real workings of the day at school—that they're not separate and apart. They feel as much a piece of the fabric of the school as anyone else. When they walk in the front doors, they feel they belong and that, "This is my place today as much as anybody else's, and I've got as much love and attention as anyone else is going to get." (Anonymous administrator, 1997)

Early Childhood Education

Research has been conducted comparing low-income housed students with students experiencing homelessness, and it reveals that homelessness increases the likelihood of chronic health problems, developmental delays, lower academic achievement, and emotional difficulties. Those at greatest risks for psychological and emotional problems, cognitive difficulties, weaknesses in visual-motor skills, language delays, and poor school performance were homeless preschoolers (Klein, Bittel, & Molnar, 1993; Rescoria, Parker, & Stolley, 1991).

One explanation for preschoolers being at greater risk than school-age homeless students is the lack of available educational experiences for younger children (Rescoria et al., 1991). School-age students benefit from the structure and consistency the classroom provides, while the quality and quantity of childcare programs are concerns in many areas of the country. For homeless youngsters, the need is extremely pressing since programs for preschoolers are limited and often have waiting lists for enrollment. Waiting lists are incongruent with the short stays a homeless family may face, and the cost of quality programs is often beyond the reach of struggling families.

Crowded in a shelter, doubled-up setting, campground, or car limits preschoolers' ability to explore their world, and the lack of safe space for such exploration hinders children's development of gross and fine motor skills. Parents absorbed with the immediate needs of finding food and shelter for their family may have less energy in reserve to talk with their youngsters, read to them, and nurture critical language skills, yet positive interactions with adults are important to developing trust. Safe, healthy, nurturing, stimulating preschool programs can provide critical experiences to enhance the homeless child's sense of security and willingness to take risks, which, in turn, may lead to success in future learning environments (Eddowes, in press). Such programs also provide parents with the freedom to pursue job training and job search activities that are hindered when having to care for a young child.

Programs such as Head Start and Even Start can be encouraged to set aside a few enrollment slots to be used by homeless students. The same slot may be used by a number of different children as they enter and leave the area. Combining childcare and preschool access with parent training programs or developing family literacy programs is another approach to meeting preschooler and family needs that can be found in a number of models for serving homeless children and their families (Nunez & Collignon, 1999).

Elementary Education

Homeless children who are elementary school-aged are more likely to be in shelters than their older counterparts, making this population easier to identify (Burt, 1996). Public schools may provide the needed services that are so limited for younger children. In addition to the access and acceptance discussed above, students who are homeless have other needs to which teachers should be alerted. Among the greatest needs are personal space, predictable structure, and a sense of belonging (Oakley & Kling, in press). The following are some suggestions educators can consider to support homeless students:

- Have a safe place for student belongings designated in the classroom or another place in the school, such as the office or guidance counselor's room. When basic necessities are limited, students have little that they can call their own. Privacy and personal belongings are often forfeited. Fear of losing the few personal items they have may lead children to carry all these items to school.
- Allow students to work at their desks as an option, rather than sitting on the floor. The

floor may be the only option in an overcrowded residence, making even the student's desk a refuge for a homeless student—a place of his/her own.

- Keep extra sets of instructional supplies, such as paper, notebooks, pens, and pencils on hand to be shared with students privately.
- Provide a structured, predictable routine to lend security and stability to the school setting.
- Share addressed, stamped envelopes and writing supplies with a student who leaves to maintain a connection and sense of belonging, even after the student has gone. (Oakley & Kling, in press)

Secondary Education

Educators who work with homeless middle school students must be highly flexible to bridge the enormous developmental range that exists in such a setting. Vissing (in press) notes that, with ages ranging from 9 to 14, educators might find younger students closer to elementary school-aged students who look to the adults in their lives to support their needs. Older homeless middle-schoolers may be independent of their families, living on their own, with peers, or with informally-designated guardians. While younger students may wish to hide their homelessness from teachers and peers, this desire to conceal homelessness becomes stronger as students mature. Older students are less likely to ask for and accept help. When they do, it is often a reflection of the high level of trust that has been established. To reinforce such trust, educators will need to find ways to meet the students' needs quickly. School nurses, counselors, administrators, and teachers can become better educated about the resources in the community to facilitate referral and access when the need arises.

Powers and Jaklitsch (1992) note that while "homelessness among adolescents is not a new social problem, over the past several decades it has increased in volume, scope, and visibility" (p. 117). Whether they choose to leave home (that is, runaways) or are forced to leave home (that is, throwaways), "the consequences of homelessness can be devastating for young people" (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993, p. 394). The effects of street life, substance abuse, living conditions, health problems, family background, developmental lags, and emotional and psychological problems can effectively separate homeless youth from education (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993). Anderson et al. (1995) note the extreme barriers that homeless youth face in merely accessing school, such as curfew laws that make them guilty of a crime because they have no place else to go. Liability and safety concerns have led some schools to refuse to admit homeless teens.

There are no simple solutions for getting homeless teens in school and helping them succeed once there; however, there are strategies that can be helpful. Vissing, Schroepfer, and Bloise (1994) suggest that independent homeless youth be offered assistance that addresses childcare responsibilities, job requirements, the absence of home libraries and places suitable for study, and a host of related problems they encounter. Providing flexibility in school policies and procedures, such as admissions criteria, attendance policies, course offerings, and class assignments, can be paramount to getting adolescents in school and keeping them there. Homeless teens attending school should be recognized and their extreme efforts to remain in school acknowledged. These students have chosen not to give up, despite the barriers and the turmoil of their daily lives. Focusing on this commitment may be a powerful argument to support the consideration and flexibility a homeless student will need to remain in school and graduate. Additionally, assisting with emotional support, making community resources accessible, and providing special services, such as special education and transportation, are vital.

Special Education

For students with special needs, homelessness adds a number of confounding variables (Korinek, Walther-Thomas, & Laycock, 1992). To begin, identification of a disability requiring special education includes ruling out environmental variables, such as poverty. However, recent brain research is revealing the role of environment and experiences in creating structural changes in the brain. Lack of stimulation and a rich learning environment

during critical periods of development are believed to impact the proper creation of neuronal connections that facilitate future learning. In addition, other environmental factors—such as the presence of lead paint in old, untended buildings—have long been identified with brain damage. Stressors related to homelessness can impact a child's well-being.

Secondly, the eligibility process that leads to the provision of special education services is prolonged for a child who is homeless. The prolonged period to complete the necessary testing and data gathering is intended to ensure due process; however, such timing runs counter to the transience of many homeless students. A student may have testing begun in one school district and leave before completion, only to be identified for referral again in the new school. Unless the records are quickly forwarded to the receiving school, the student may undergo a new battery. Worse yet, the child may not remain in one school long enough for the teachers to recognize the presence of a disability, believing difficulties may be attributable to the student's adjustment to the new school.

Even students who have been identified for special education and have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) face additional risks when homeless. Expediting the forwarding of the IEP to the receiving school can prevent delays in the delivery of appropriate services. Where transitional schools designed for students who are homeless exist, the services designated on the IEP may not be available, preventing the student from receiving an appropriate education (Rafferty, 1999).

Informal screenings for incoming students to identify skills levels, strengths, and weaknesses can lessen loss of instructional time when educational records are incomplete. Instructional arrangements, such as collaborative or co-teaching, may be helpful in providing support for homeless students, whether or not an IEP is presented. In addition, school districts can expedite the eligibility process for students identified as homeless, assist parents in ensuring that records reach new schools in a timely fashion, and find ways to collaborate across departments and agencies to more effectively meet the needs of homeless students who require special education (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 1996).

Family Connections

Addressing educational issues is only one side of the multidimensional needs of homeless students. With so many basic needs unmet, educators must look beyond academics and provide social, physical, and emotional support to help these students realize educational benefit; however, educators cannot do this alone. Creativity and openness to potential partnerships are needed to address such complex needs. The next two sections will explore the importance of family and community connections in meeting the educational (broadly defined) needs of homeless students.

Parental involvement and support are essential if education is to become and remain a priority for homeless children (Oakley & Kling, in press; Stronge & Hudson, 1999). Although parents of homeless students often recognize the importance of education for long-term success, they often are too preoccupied with securing basic needs to advocate effectively for their children's educational needs (Yon & Sebastien-Kadie, 1994) and may be unaware of the resources for and rights of their children—knowledge parents need in order to make informed decisions for their children.

Oakley and Kling (in press) suggest that education for homeless students shift its focus from child-centered to family-centered. When Oakley would ask children how her center could help them, the response was often, "Help Mom [and/or other adult(s) accompanying the child]." Children recognize the importance of supporting the family to increase the likelihood of reaching and maintaining a stable home environment. This change in the student's life will ultimately support greater success in school. Since homeless families can range from first time to chronic homelessness, families along this continuum are likely to require different levels of support. Oakley and Kling recommend that families be empowered to share in decisions about their support services by providing choices rather than mandating certain types of training or programming.

Homelessness should not be equated with helplessness, and service providers should be active listeners who help families recognize and build upon their strengths. The family's goals should be identified and used in shaping the support provided. An example of how this can be applied to the student's education is found in the McKinney Act's requirement that parents or guardians be included in the school selection decision to determine if the home school or school in the current residency area should be attended. Transportation is often a hindrance in providing such options; however, involving the parent or guardian in a problem-solving process to identify possible avenues to circumvent this barrier can be empowering, providing the parent with control and responsibility.

Despite the fact that homeless families may lack family strength, parents do not lack concern and aspirations for their children (Stronge & Hudson, 1999). Within the context of a respectful, sensitive environment, parents can become partners in the educational enterprise with encouragement and assistance. Educators should be sensitive to the discomfort parents may experience when entering a school, especially if their own school history was unsuccessful. This is an important consideration when the average homeless parent–typically a young single mother with one or two children–reads at or below the sixth-grade level and left school by the tenth grade (Nunez, 1996, cited in Nunez & Collignon, 1999).

Classrooms that are inviting and welcoming for parents create a gateway into the educational systems. "One cannot provide a supportive climate for homeless children without soliciting the help of the parents" (Gonzalez, 1992, p. 200). In an effort to facilitate the creation of a supportive climate, Gonzalez

Table 3
Building Parental Involvement and Support

Types of Support	Examples of Effective Strategies
School and Community Relations	• Foster positive and consistent communication with parents. • Build trust between parents and school staff. • Provide a "personal touch" rather than an air of professionalism.
Parent Efficacy	• Demonstrate how parents can assist with schoolwork. • Provide suggestions to help parents be positive role models for their children.
Parent Training	• Provide training, including parenting skills, availability of community services, preventing/overcoming substance abuse, improving parents' basic skills, and discipline techniques.

offered the suggestions summarized in Table 3 (adapted from Stronge, in press).

School liaison personnel (social workers, guidance counselors) and parent education programs can enhance parent-child relationships by emphasizing protective factors of structure, positive interaction, and developmentally appropriate goals (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997). Family members also play a vital role that supports the development of their children through modeling behavior, teaching competency, and facing challenges (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1998). It should be clear that a partnership with parents needs to be forged to assist students in accessing and succeeding in school (Stronge & Hudson, 1999).

Nunez and Collignon (1999) recommend the creation of "communities of learning" that combine "the educational expertise of schools with the experience and services of shelters...that supplement a child's regular education" (p. 76). Through the creation of partnerships between shelter providers and public schools, the following structures described in Table 4 can be created to support homeless students and their families.

While many of the activities appear to reflect shelter activities, schools may provide liaisons to support the development of such programs and enhance school-shelter communication. Nunez and Collignon (1999) suggest that schools will need to increase their involvement in such programs if homeless youth not living in shelters are to access these types of supports: "It is here in the schools that communities of learning hold the most promise—for children in shelters, children moving between doubled-up housing, and poor children in general" (p. 86).

Table 4
Communities of Learning

Component	Examples of Programs and Strategies
Children's Education	• One-to-one tutoring and homework assistance • Short-term theme-based exercises aligned with public school curricula • Extended school year or summer school programs • Parental involvement through volunteering in programs located at the shelter and attending teacher conferences • Family literacy programs, such as Together in Learning (TIL) developed by American Family Inns
Parent Education	• A continuum of programs from GED preparation through job training and placement • Life skills programs that can be short-term (for example, parenting, health, nutrition, budgeting, stress management, accessing community resources, home maintenance) in a non-traditional workshop environment rather than a traditional "schooling" approach • Flexible program scheduling, length, and duration, including compressing programs to be delivered over a shorter period of time • Availability of childcare
Family Support	• Attending to basic needs: providing food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention • Attending to less obvious needs that impact homeless families: family violence, substance abuse, or mental illness through counseling, education programs, and collaboration with community resources • Supporting the acquisition and maintenance of permanent housing

Community Support Structures

> A growing proportion of America's children needs easy access to a broad array of high-quality services and supports that seek to prevent, as well as to treat, their problems and that recognize the interrelationship among their education, social service, health, child welfare, employment, and training needs. (Melaville & Blank, 1991, p. 6)

Among those with the most complex needs are students experiencing homelessness. Maslow, in his hierarchy, recognizes that basic survival needs must be addressed for academics to progress. Masten and her colleagues (1997) reiterate the importance of meeting basic needs to address education, based on their research looking at the educational risks homeless students face. "Programs to unobtrusively boost the nutrition, hygiene, and appearance of these children at school may need to be considered along with programs to boost school stability, attendance, reading skills, perceived belonging, and home-school connections" (Masten, et al., 1997, p. 43). This complexity requires shared efforts of many players.

There are numerous avenues to meet the varied needs of students in homeless situations by linking with a broad array of community resources. Schools can increase the success of the homeless students they serve by identifying those community resources and initiating or participating in collaborative endeavors. A coordinated, collaborative approach to education seems to be especially important when dealing with homeless students. It would be presumptuous to believe that schools, alone, can solve the problems of the homeless. Although education is fundamental to breaking the grip of poverty (Stronge, 1993), the problems associated with homelessness are multidimensional and rooted in the broader community; so, too, must the solutions to homelessness be multidimensional and based squarely in the broader community.

The McKinney Act requires that each state ensure that coordination among agencies (that is, state departments of education, local school districts, other public and community agencies) serving homeless individuals be emphasized (P.L. 103-382). As Anderson et al. (1995) notes

> Coordination and collaboration focus on identifying available services and resources and communicating this information to those in need. By promoting coordination and collaboration locally, states have enabled school districts and service providers to stretch their available resources and thus be able to better serve homeless children and youth. (p. 36)

Using Melaville and Blank's (1991) framework, Yon, Mickelson, and Carlton-LaNey (1993) describe five variables that have been found to be effective in shaping interagency partnerships, as summarized in Table 5 (adapted from Stronge, in press).

A partial list of potential partners within the community may include homeless and domestic violence shelters, food pantries, clothes closets, local churches and synagogues, public health agencies, community development and housing boards, and volunteer organizations. Where such services are lacking in a community, the school may choose to institute a school-based program. By tapping existing services, schools can create service-learning opportunities that involve all students, incorporate academic skills in real-life applications, and build student and community awareness about the many faces of homelessness.

> When looking at the issue of homelessness from the perspective of education, there seems to be little that can be done to significantly impact the problem because the immediate solu-

Table 5
Developing Effective Collaborative Programs for Homeless Students

Characteristics	Description of Effective Strategies
Climate	The social and political *climate* should make collaboration a top priority and encourage the community, key decision makers, and service providers to support one another.
Process	A *process* of collaboration should be developed in which partners accept the goals of others and attempt to resolve difficulties that arise.
Leadership	The quality of *leadership* of the people who are part of interagency partnerships is critical, and their efforts should build on their collective vision, commitment, and competence.
Policies	Because collaborative efforts frequently bring together agencies with differing (possibly competing) agendas, agencies must establish *policies* that encourage cooperation rather than competition.
Resources	When coordinating existing services or in creating new services, *resources* must be pooled or reconfigured to meet the needs of the target homeless population.

tion will come only through the provision of adequate, affordable housing. Yet, if we fail to do what we can about educating homeless children, then, as a nation, we may forfeit our opportunity to make a dramatic difference in the lives of hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of children and youth. (NASCEHCY, 1997, p. 3)

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SECTION TWO

Selected Articles

The following matrix will enable readers to select articles that pertain to a particular topic of interest. Many of the articles address several topics, reflecting the complexity and interrelatedness of the issues surrounding the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

	Background Issues	Community Issues	Educational Issues	Family/ Parent Issues	Legal/Policy Issues
Eddowes (1993)–p. 25			✘	✘	
McChesney–p. 33				✘	
McGee (1996)–p. 46	✘		✘		
Nunez & Collignon (1997)–p. 50		✘	✘	✘	
Powers & Jaklitsch (1993)–p. 55		✘	✘	✘	
Rafferty (1998)–p. 65	✘		✘		
Rafferty (1999)–p. 70					✘
Reed-Victor & Pelco (1999)–p. 80		✘	✘	✘	
Stronge (1997)–p. 94	✘		✘		
Stronge & Hudson (1999)–p. 104	✘		✘		
Tucker (1999)–p. 113		✘			
Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams (1996) –p. 125			✘		

Education of Younger Homeless Children in Urban Settings

Eddowes, Anne (1993). "Education of Younger Homeless Children in Urban Settings." *Education and Urban Society*, 25, 381-393. Reprinted with permission.

Homelessness really exists in urban communities and is on the increase. It is estimated that 100,000 children go to sleep homeless each night. A large percentage of these children are in cities (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Historically, the stereotypical image of homelessness was that of unattached alcoholic men and slightly deranged bag ladies (Bassuk, 1990; Jones, Levine, & Rosenberg, 1991). However, in the past decade, a demographic shift has occurred in the homeless population, and now more than one third of all homeless people include families with children (Alker, 1992; Children's Defense Fund, 1992). The majority of these families are headed by women (Bassuk, 1990). Although problems for any homeless person are grave, those of homeless families are particularly critical because of the potential for developmental impairment in the children (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991).

Homeless children live on the streets, in public places, cars, abandoned buildings, tent cities, welfare hotels, and other shelters (Alker, 1992; McCormick & Holden, 1992). They spend their lives in full public view with little predictability from day to day (Maza & Hall, 1988). Many of the children have severe emotional, social, developmental, educational, or health problems (Bassuk & Rubin, 1987). Without comprehensive programs to address these problems, the majority of the children will not become productive citizens.

This article will review the educational problems facing the younger homeless children in urban communities. Positive solutions in the development of childcare and school programs will be examined with descriptions of several models that are currently in operation.

Educational Problems of Homeless Children

When does education begin? Informal education begins at birth. Parents educate children when they teach them to talk, to interact with others, and to behave in certain ways. Child caregivers continue the use of informal education in their relationships with young children, along with some organized formal education practices. Teachers in public schools tend to use more formal educational methods, with less emphasis on informal instruction (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990).

The Young Homeless Child

The first care for many young children is provided by the family in a home setting. Satisfaction of physical needs for comfort, nutritious food, healthful practices, and consistency all contribute to one or another aspect of a young child's development. A home provides a relatively secure environment. There is space to explore and to enhance motor skills as well as to provide an outlet for the child's curiosity and developing autonomy. A parent or another adult is available to act as a resource and is able to assist the child with the acquisition of language and cognitive and social skills (Eddowes, 1992).

Young homeless children do not have the level of comfort, nutritional requirements, or health support necessary to ensure that their physical development will proceed normally. For example, homeless children were more likely to have gone hungry during the prior month than were stably housed poor children in Los Angeles (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). Daily

nutritional requirements are hard to meet when there is little money, and cooking must be done either in a shared facility or on an illegal hot plate (Kozol, 1988). It is also difficult to keep infants and toddlers dry and comfortable when there are limited washing facilities. When health and nutrition needs in young children are not met, they may become lethargic and not interested in engaging in the same activities that healthier children enjoy.

Little stability is available for a young child who is temporarily housed. In fact, many dangerous situations can exist for young children in temporary homes, including shelters. There may be lead-based paint peeling from the walls. It is estimated that between three and four million children in the United States have unsafe levels of lead in their blood (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Broken glass, unscreened windows, crawling insects, and other dangers can be harmful to the young child who is trying to satisfy his or her curiosity (Eddowes, 1992). As toddlers progress from dependence to independence, they need opportunities to move out from a secure base and explore. Children who have few acceptable ways of expressing their independence may exhibit regressive behaviors. Without a consistent environment, the homeless child is unable to develop the trust and autonomy necessary for normal emotional development (Erikson, 1963).

The problems of homeless parents are overwhelming. They are often depressed and have little emotional strength to use in positive interactions with their children. Depressive moods may cause insensitivity to children's cues and needs (Rutter, 1990). This depression can lead to disruptions in parenting, which, in turn, can contribute to maladaptive functioning in the children (Dodge, 1990). Children who have little control over their lives may become aggressive. Rules of behavior in a shelter may be unclear or run counter to those the children have learned elsewhere. Parents may have an inappropriate understanding of the expectations for normal child behavior. The parenting styles they use may not be supportive of their children's needs (Walsh, 1990a).

The homeless parent may not have the energy to talk with the child or to read to him. Preschool children usually do have energy, and they need safe outlets for it. There must be situations in which they can make choices and engage in activities for problem-solving and creative expression (Bredekamp, 1987). Childcare centers can help meet the needs of young homeless children by giving them a safe, healthy environment with meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities. Interactions with caring adults in a stress-free environment can act as a respite from the remainder of the 24-hour day. Parental involvement in center activities and parent education are important in strengthening the informal education potential of the parents in relationships with their children (Walsh, 1990a).

The School-Age Homeless Child

Even the elementary school child who has a home comes to the program with a continuing need for security and predictability in his or her life. There must be a shared responsibility of family and school in assisting the child to take responsibility for his or her own learning and thereby create feelings of self-worth. Children of this age build friendships among peers in their neighborhoods, but there is also an interest in expanding that base to include new friends at school. They need to develop both the social and cognitive skills that will build competence and help them succeed in the greater society (Eddowes, 1992).

Traditionally, homeless children have not been able to attend public schools because they do not meet requirements such as residency, proof of age, immunization, health records, and other roadblocks. In response to this problem, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. Part of that Act requires states to ensure that homeless children are guaranteed access to education (Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989). However, in 1992, states ranked from excellent to poor in their implementation of the law (First, 1992).

Even though homeless children have the legal right to attend school, the school personnel and program must provide a safe and trustworthy atmosphere to ensure that these children want to attend. Teach-

ers may be unaware that a child is homeless. Moreover, homeless parents have difficulty serving as advocates for their children (Walsh, 1990b). Teachers can assist students by trying to understand their problems and by reaching out to their homeless parents (Horowitz, Springer, & Kose, 1988).

Homeless children find it difficult to develop lasting friendships because they move so often. Even though a student may attend a school for only a short period of time, sensitive teachers can provide activities supportive of friends in the classroom and thereby enhance his or her social skills (Eddowes, 1992).

Public schools offer a more formal educational program than is found in childcare centers, but there must be a match of the ability of the homeless student with the content provided in the curriculum. Homeless children may come to school with anxiety concerning the new situation, or they may suffer depression because they worry that they will not be successful (Walsh, 1990b). Homeless children may have irregular school attendance, and they may have repeated a grade level. Teachers should be skilled in diagnosing and planning for each student's needs. If not, the school will become part of the problem, and possible learning difficulties may not be identified, resulting in further decline of both the student's academic performance and self-esteem (Duke, 1992-1993). This can be detrimental for both the cognitive and language development of these students (Whitman, Accardo, Boyert, & Kendagor, 1990). Clearly, schools must be caring places that are supportive of homeless families.

The Urban Environment: Help or Hindrance in Educating Homeless Children?

Cities are large, busy places. Homeless families are either in a city when they become homeless, or they move to a city because of the potential for jobs and services. They hope a job will lead to a home. However, in the 25 largest metropolitan areas, a single wage earner would have to earn $17.67 an hour to be able to afford reasonable rent and utilities on a two-bedroom apartment (Dolbeare & Alker, 1990). Those kinds of jobs are usually not available to homeless people, and so their dream goes unrealized.

Finding themselves homeless in a city can be frightening. Because the problem of homeless families is relatively new, urban communities have not yet developed long-range strategies. Comprehensive services are limited, and public funding varies from state to state (Bassuk, 1990). A recent report from the U.S. Conference of Mayors stated that a growing number of homeless Americans, including many children, had to be turned away by public and private agencies in the cities this past year ("Cities Say," 1992). Most urban shelters are not organized to accept intact families. Mothers and their children are accepted, but usually fathers and boys over 12 must find other accommodations. Thus, most shelters serve only women, whether married or single, and their younger children (Alker, 1992; Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

While mothers are looking for employment, and then when they find it, they must have childcare for preschool children and before- and after-school care for elementary school children. Daycare centers may not be located near their temporary home, there may not be openings, or the cost may be prohibitive. Public schools may not provide transportation from the temporary home to the school. This means that parents must use the public transportation system, which can be expensive as well as dangerous (Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989).

It is difficult for parents to get around in cities, as well. Agencies that provide needed services may be separated out over many city blocks. Transportation problems are continuous, as are the lines. Homeless

people must line up to eat, use the bathroom, request benefits, and see a caseworker (Kozol, 1988).

Many homeless women have been abused as children and as adults. Because they have already been victims, they have many fears (Milburne & D'Ercole, 1991). There is the fear that the authorities will take the children because of neglect or abuse. A young mother may have the fear that someone will steal her baby. There is also the fear of young and old alike that they will be killed by some faction or other that preys on the homeless.

Although there may be agencies that can help the homeless in cities, urban environments can present problems that may hinder homeless families in their coping with everyday life. This can be true for them generally as well as in the education of their children.

Positive Solutions in the Development of Childcare and School Programs

Care of Young Homeless Children

Young homeless children have been found to have language, cognitive, and behavioral problems. They may exhibit symptoms of withdrawal, aggression, speech delays, and behavioral problems. A high-quality childcare experience can have positive effects on a child's cognitive and socioemotional development, both in the short-term and in the long-term education and general life experiences of homeless children (Haskins, 1989; Molnar, Rath, & Klein, 1991).

High-quality, stable childcare has been found to be a factor in later academic progress and the development of school skills. It is also related to the development of fewer school behavioral problems. But what is high-quality childcare, and how can it be made available to homeless children? Some important considerations include caregivers who have received formal training in child development, small group size, low child-adult ratios, an individualized program, and ample physical space (Howes, 1988). Licensing standards in the various states only ensure a minimum standard of quality. A level that exceeds minimum is recommended through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1984).

Programs for young children must be available, accessible, financially feasible, and able to provide developmentally appropriate activities. Shelters and other community agencies should make an effort to provide these young homeless children with programs that are supportive of their development. Ideally, shelters should have on-site daycare available at no cost to the parent. The programs should have flexible schedules and provide social and case management services. Parent training and parent support groups should also be included (Molnar, Rath, & Klein, 1990; McCormick & Holden, 1992). To help preschool children who are not necessarily living in a shelter, a new program called Kidstart has begun work in Massachusetts. Through observation and evaluation, a case manager assesses the needs of each child, then links that child to appropriate services. It might be counseling, Head Start, health care, or another childcare program. During the past two years, the Kidstart program has been expanded to several other states (Better Homes Foundation Staff, 1990-1991, 1992-1993).

Homeless Children at School

If homeless school-age children surmount the residency, financial, transportation, health, and other barriers, they may be able to enroll in a public school (Stronge & Tenhouse, 1990). However, that could be the beginning of their problems. The other children may not accept them. They may be misplaced in grade level or in materials used within a classroom. There may not be identification of special education needs. There may be no understanding of the problems these students have in completing homework. As soon as the student begins to become an accepted member of the class, he or

she may be moving again (Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989; Walsh, 1990b).

As children proceed from the supportive environment of a comprehensive childcare program, they should be able to attend a public school program that has an early childhood unit for children ages four through eight. This unit would include an age-appropriate curriculum that provides for both individual differences and cultural and linguistic diversity among children. It would support parents as partners in their child's development and provide comprehensive services through agencies and informal networks in the community (National Association of State School Boards of Education, 1988). A continued need for teacher sensitivity is necessary as students move from the early childhood unit in a public school to the upper grades. Teachers must be aware of the problems of homeless students and continue to provide an individualized program. Extended care before and after school can include provision for completion of homework (Eddowes, 1992). Administrators can provide staff development that helps teachers understand and implement better methods of working with students who are at risk for failure (Duke, 1992-1993). Teachers can become advocates for these children.

A program incorporating a comprehensive approach in working with homeless children is found in City Park School in Dallas, Texas, which has both a high mobility and a high poverty rate. However, the staff members have been able to assist new students in feeling accepted, and they provide support for both academic and psychosocial needs. There is a strong emphasis on basic skills. School supplies are given to the students. Learning styles are matched with teaching styles. Parents are referred to medical and social services. The school has been very successful, and the result of this effort is that homeless students do not want to leave (Gonzalez, 1990).

Other Successful Homeless Education Models Emphasizing Programs for Younger Children

Our House, Inc.
Decatur, Georgia

This agency provides free, quality daycare to homeless children between the ages of two months and six years who live in shelters in the county. School-age children are cared for on an emergency basis until they can begin school. Children can stay from a few days to five months, including 90 days of free care after moving to permanent housing. The program provides safe space, a healthy diet, health care, cognitive stimulation, and emotional support to the young children. Parents are encouraged to participate.

Practical help is provided, including assistance with transportation, clothing, housing, employment, and training. The program personnel work closely with other state and local agencies in the area (Walsh, 1990a).

My Place Child Development Center
Birmingham, Alabama

This project is designed to identify and treat the physical, emotional, and cognitive problems in preschool children of homeless parents who are temporarily housed in shelters. The program also includes counseling, case management, and services that improve parenting skills. Three classrooms are provided by the Birmingham School District. Outreach is also provided in six family shelters in the metropolitan area.

A part of the Birmingham Health Care for the Homeless Coalition, My Place offers medical and dental evaluations, developmental testing, individual and group counseling, age-appropriate activities, play therapy, and help with special needs. To provide these services, there are links with state and local agencies, including the University of Alabama at Birmingham (Walsh, 1990b).

Grace Hill Family Center
St. Louis, Missouri

This agency provides shelter-based educational services for homeless parents and children. The program's first priority is to enroll shelter children in school. The family is consulted to identify school placement preferences. A peer counselor works with school officials to ensure that records are transferred and transportation arrangements are obtained. Teachers are also informed of special needs of the homeless students.

Volunteers provide on-site childcare for preschool children while parents are looking for employment and housing. Volunteers also provide tutoring for school-age children. Parents are encouraged to read to their children and help them with their homework. There is coordination with other agencies, including health centers, housing, social services, counseling, and job placement (Zeldin & Bogart, 1990).

Madison Metropolitan School District
Madison, Wisconsin

The district offers transitional services for homeless children from kindergarten through the fifth grade to facilitate reentry into the public schools. A transition room staffed by a teacher, a psychologist, and an aide is located at an elementary school that is close to the city's shelters. A child's stay in the transition room is brief. However, the student receives school materials, is provided counseling for emotional problems, and meets with the principal and teachers. Children are tested to determine grade level and placement. Classroom teachers who will be instructing the children are given assessment information.

Transportation services are provided to students not living in shelters. Transition room staff also travel to other schools to provide personnel training and to assist in evaluating homeless students who bypass the transition room. The program provides case management and supportive services to students above the fifth grade (Zeldin & Bogart, 1990).

First Place
Seattle, Washington

This is an elementary school project designed to meet the educational and emotional needs of homeless children. Space as well as transportation from shelters in the metropolitan area is provided by the Seattle Public Schools. The program operates in two classrooms with children from kindergarten through sixth grade in attendance. The children can stay in this school until parents find a permanent home.

The program includes nutritious meals, academic work, and a quiet time for reading. Volunteers assist the two teachers with a flexible individualized curriculum. Teachers give individual attention, counseling, and extra help with schoolwork when needed. It is a happy place in which children learn to trust adults in a stable atmosphere (Berger, 1990).

Lighted Schoolhouse Program
Houston, Texas

This project is a joint effort of the Houston Independent School District and the YMCA After-School Program. It serves as an intermediary between homeless children and community service agencies. Resources and an alternative home environment are provided for homeless and unattended school-age children from 3:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in a shelter. The YMCA After-School Program provides licensed daycare from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Children receive assistance with homework, nutritious snacks, clothing, and school supplies. Program personnel act as role models in a caring environment that is a safe alternative to the streets. There are interesting activities for the children. The project also helps with health care needs and referrals to other social agencies (Stevens, 1991).

Harbor Summit School
San Diego, California

This is a self-contained, shelter-based elementary school that is administered by the San Diego County Office of Education. The goal of the school is to help prepare and assist homeless children from kindergarten through eighth grade in their transi-

tion to a regular school setting. Academic instruction is provided as well as support for problems of self-concept and stress.

There are three classrooms, each staffed by a full-time teacher and an aide. Additionally, another aide provides tutoring services during most of the week. A low adult-student ratio is supplemented by computer-assisted instruction. Students participate in after-school activities, such as arts and crafts, outdoor recreation, and field trips. Project personnel cooperate with other community agencies that assist families in finding permanent housing. When this occurs, students are placed in appropriate schools (Zeldin & Bogart, 1990).

Summary

During the 1980s, there has been an explosion of homeless families with young children. Many of the children are living in dangerous physical environments. Their families may be separated, and there is usually a disruption of the children's education. Unhealthy conditions along with emotional stress on the children may cause developmental impairment.

The urban environment can offer opportunities. However, it may hinder families in their quest for a better life by providing only short-term solutions. There is a continuing need for high-quality, affordable childcare to enable homeless parents to secure work. In addition, there must be an expansion of public school programs that reach out and support homeless parents as partners in their children's education.

Several different types of programs have been described that have had some measure of success in different areas of the country. However, there is much work yet to be done if the homeless children of today are to become the productive citizens of tomorrow.

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Homeless Families Since 1980: Implications for Education

McChesney, Kay Young (1993). "Homeless Families Since 1980: Implications for Education." *Education and Urban Society*, 25, 361-380. Reprinted with permission.

It has been more than a decade since the Human Resources Administration in New York City first noticed a 25-percent increase in the number of families seeking emergency shelter in 1981, signaling the rise of the "new" family homelessness–the first large-scale family homelessness seen in the United States since the Great Depression (McChesney, 1986/1991). Since then, considerable research on homeless families has been done.

At first, there was a need to establish family homelessness as a social problem through demonstrating the existence of homeless families and the circumstances under which they were living. Thus, many of the studies done in the early 1980s were conducted by advocates or social service agency workers, were based on research methods such as key informant surveys, included population estimates that now appear to have been inaccurate (cf., for example, Burt, 1992 and Rossi, 1991), and are available only in photocopy form, as part of what Robertson (1986) calls "fugitive literature." However, these early studies, in concert with press coverage and such popular works as Kozol's (1988) *Rachel and Her Children*, were successful in their mission and will not be reviewed here. That homeless families and homeless children exist and that their circumstances are dire are now taken as givens by social service professionals, many policymakers, and at least part of the public.

However, there is still much to be done. The purpose of this article is to summarize what we have learned about contemporary homeless families from empirically based research done on urban homeless families since 1980 and to suggest some of the implications of those findings for education. To be included in this review, research projects had to (a) have samples of 50 or more urban homeless families and (b) have one or more refereed journal articles that included empirical data on urban homeless families, published or in press. Ten research projects met this criteria. Because unaccompanied homeless adolescents, often called runaways or throwaways, seem to constitute a very different population from adolescents who are homeless with a parent, studies on unaccompanied homeless adolescents will not be included in this article.

Characteristics of the Ten Research Projects on Urban Homeless Families

The methodological characteristics of the ten research projects are summarized in Table 1 (on the following page). The principal investigator or the researcher with the most published articles for each project is shown on the left; empirical articles resulting from the project are referenced in the notes below the table. Studies are included in the table in the order of the years in which the data were collected, ranging from 1985 to 1992. Although most of the information presented in Table 1 is based on the published papers, some is based on personal communication.

Of the ten studies shown in Table 1, Burt and Cohen's (1989a, 1989b) is an attempt to draw a representative national sample of homeless persons. It is included in this review because their sample was urban—it was drawn from a stratified probability sample of 178 U.S. cities—and because they published statistics for 258 families who were among the sample. The rest of the studies were all specifically designed to study homeless families.

The studies were done in major cities—Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York City, and St. Louis—with two exceptions: the Goodman (1991a, 1991b) study included shelters in two smaller cities within the Boston metropolitan area (L.A. Goodman, personal communication, January 1993), and in her statistics, Dail (1990) combined a sample of families from shelters in Washington, DC, with families from shelters in Richmond, Virginia (P. W. Dail, personal communication, January 1993).

As can be seen in Table 1, the earliest studies and the studies with the smallest sample sizes tend to have convenience samples. However, the majority of the more recent studies employ representative samples. Although this cannot be seen in the table, there also seems to be a clear relationship between the amount of funding and the use of a representative sample. Large, well-funded projects use representative samples, presumably because funding agencies require it; studies done on a shoestring budget tend to have convenience samples.

Table 1
Methodological Characteristics of Ten Studies of Urban Homeless Families

Urban Homeless Family Studies	Year in Field	Place	Research Methods	Representative Sample	Sample Size	Comparison Group Size	Children Assessed
Bassuk and Colleagues[a]	1985-1986	Boston	Clinical assessment, survey, and standardized instrument	No	80	81	Yes
McChesney[b]	1985-1986	Los Angeles	Intensive interview	No	80	None	No
Mills and Ota[c]	1987	Detroit	Case record	No	77	None	No
Burt and Cohen[d]	1987	National Instrument	Survey and standardized instrument	Yes	268	None	No
Wood and Colleagues[e]	1988	Los Angeles	Survey and standardized instrument	Yes	196	194	Yes
Dail[f]	1988-1989	Washington, DC & Richmond, VA	Standardized instrument and intensive interview	No	53	None	No
Weitzman and Colleagues[g]	1988	New York City	Survey and standardized instrument	Yes	704	524	No
Goodman[h]	1989	Cambridge and Somerville, MA	Survey and standardized instrument	Yes	50	50	No
Johnson and Colleagues[i]	1983-1991	St. Louis	Case record	Yes	1,472	None	No
Fishcher and Breakey[j]	1990-1992	Baltimore	Clinical assessment, survey, and standardized instrument	Yes	126	107	Yes

a. Bassuk and Rubin (1987); Bassuk, Rubin, and Lauriat (1986); Bassuk and Rosenberg (1988, 1990).
b. McChesney (1987, 1992a, 1992b).
c. Mills and Ota (1989).
d. Burt and Cohen (1989a, 1989b).
e. Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, and Shen (1990a, 1990b).
f. Dail (1990).
g. Knickman, Weitzman, Shinn, and Marcus (1989); Shinn, Knickman, and Weitzman (1991); Weitzman, Knickman, and Shinn (1990).
h. Goodman (1991a, 1991b).
i. Johnson, (1989); McChesney, Butterfield, and Johnson (1993).
j. Fischer, Breakey, and Nestadt (1992); Breakey, Fischer, and Nestadt (1992).

A variety of research methods were used in these studies, as shown in Table 1. Most of the projects used interviewer-administered surveys that included some standardized instruments (for example, the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale or CES-D, used to assess current symptoms of depression in mothers). In addition, the two projects with psychiatrists as principal investigators, that by Bassuk and colleagues and that by Fischer and Breakey, also did clinical assessments of both mothers and children, with the aim of determining whether mothers met the criteria for a DSM III or III-R diagnosis (American Psychiatric Association, 1980, 1987) and whether children were in need of mental health treatment. Two projects, Dail (1990) and McChesney (1987, 1992a, 1992b), used intensive interview methods. The St. Louis project (Johnson, 1989) and the Mills and Ota (1989) study were based on case records.

Two of these projects are still in the field as of the date of publication of this article and, thus, can be expected to report new findings within the next few years. Shinn and Weitzman, at New York University, are engaged in a National Institute of Mental Health-funded follow-up study to locate and reinterview members of their 1988 sample. The data cited in the article for Fischer and Breakey, at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, are preliminary. Their baseline sample for both their homeless and their comparison populations is about 250 families each, and they are funded to follow these families for two years.

Substantive Findings of the Ten Research Projects on Homeless Families

Considerable progress in understanding the new family homelessness has been made since 1980. First, the early argument pitting micro-level against macro-level explanations of the etiology of family homelessness has been resolved (cf. Bassuk, Rubin, & Lauriat, 1986; Wright & Lam, 1987). Researchers now agree that a shortage of housing that is affordable to the increased number of poor households is the basic macroeconomic cause of the higher levels of homelessness observed since 1980 (see, for example, Burt, 1992; Edelman & Mihaly, 1989; McChesney, 1990; Rossi, 1989; Wright, 1989).

There is also increasing agreement on the risk factors that affect the vulnerability of poor families to homelessness, given the shortage of affordable housing. These include single-mother family, minority family, young maternal age, substance abuse, domestic violence, maternal history of abuse and foster placement, pregnancy or recent birth, and the size and proximity of a family's kin network and levels of nonkin social support.

Demographic Characteristics

A comparison of the findings from these ten studies suggests that we are making progress toward some general conclusions about the basic demographic characteristics of homeless families. First, the average age of homeless mothers, available for all but two of the studies, is remarkably consistent, ranging from 26.8 (Goodman, 1991a) to 29.5 (Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, & Shen, 1990b) years, with a modal average of 28 years. However, the implications of the consistency in average age are less clear because among the five studies with comparison groups (see Table 1), only one (Shinn, Knickman & Weitzman, 1991) found the housed comparison sample to be significantly older (34.5); the rest found no significant difference in ages.

Number of children. In every study in which researchers asked for the total number of children under 18 and the number of children under 18 currently accompanying the mother in the shelter, the number of children with the mother was smaller. There are several possibilities–the "missing" children could be staying with their fathers or fathers' kin or they could be staying with mothers' kin,

even though their families were no longer welcome there. They could have been removed from the home by child protective services, or they could have been placed in foster care at the mother's request because she was homeless. Also, some mothers report letting adolescents fend for themselves among their own circle of friends when the family became homeless (McChesney, 1985-1986).

Four studies asked mothers whether they currently had an open child neglect or abuse case or a children's protective services caseworker assigned. About one quarter of the mothers did have an open children's protective services case in the Bassuk and Rosenberg (1988) study and the Wood et al., (1990b) study, but that number fell to 19 percent in the Fischer, Breakey, and Nestadt (1992) Baltimore study and to 9.2 percent in the Weitzman, Knickman, and Shinn (1992) study in New York City. However, in all four of these studies, this percentage was two-to-five times higher than in the housed comparison group. Weitzman et al. (1992) found the differences between their two samples to be significant; significance was not computed in the other articles.

Thus, it seems likely that some of the children not in the shelter with their mothers had been legally removed from their custody because of neglect or abuse. However, the mechanism underlying these differences is not clear. Homelessness could have come first, with child removal a consequence of homelessness for some families. Given the percentages of homeless mothers who report having experienced abuse as a child and the relationship between the experience of abuse as a child and the perpetuation of abuse as an adult, it seems more likely that some of the missing children are in foster care or group homes.

Race, ethnicity, and family composition. With regard to findings on race, Hispanic origin, and family composition, it seems inappropriate to compare across the ten studies because cities differ widely on these variables. Instead, it seems more appropriate to compare the findings of representative homeless studies to statistics for each city.

Are minority families overrepresented among the homeless, just as they are among the poor? To test this hypothesis, I compared race/ethnicity profiles from the four studies with relatively large, representative samples from Table 1 (Fischer et al., 1992; Knickman, Weitzman, Shinn, & Marcus, 1989; McChesney, Butterfield, & Johnson, 1993; Wood et al., 1990b) with 1990 census data (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991a, 1991b) for family households with related children under 18.

The findings are inconsistent. As shown in Table 2, in New York City and in Los Angeles, black families are overrepresented among homeless families in comparison to poor families, just as they are overrepresented among poor families in comparison to all families with children under 18. On the other hand, in Baltimore and St. Louis, the percentage of black families among homeless families is about the same as among poor families. A similar comparison (not shown) suggests that Puerto Rican-American families may be overrepresented among homeless families in New York City in comparison to poor families, whereas in Los Angeles, Mexican-American families may be underrepresented in comparison to their presence among poor families with children under 18. (Neither Baltimore nor St. Louis has a substantial Hispanic minority.) It is worth noting that, in a multivariate analysis, Shinn, Knickman, and Weitzman (1991, p. 1183) found that race did not explain a significant proportion of variance in shelter use (homelessness) when other factors were included as controls.

Family composition. Are single-mother families significantly overrepresented among homeless families? Researchers across the country find that families headed by single mothers predominate, but researchers on the West Coast report much higher proportions of homeless families headed by couples than do researchers elsewhere, for example, 47 percent in the Wood et al. (1990b) study (see also, Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children, and Youth, 1991, p. 13). However, the Knickman et al. (1989), McChesney (1987, 1992a, 1992b), and Wood et al. (1990b) studies all reported any family in which there was a male partner, married or not, as a couple-headed family, which renders their data noncomparable to census data.

Table 2
Comparison of Percent Black in All, Poor, and Homeless Family Households With Children Under 18 in Four Cities

City	All	Poor	Homeless	Source of Homeless Estimate
New York City	35%	40%	54%	Knickman, Weitzman, Shinn, & Marcus (1989)
Los Angeles	16%	22%	57%	Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, & Shen (1990b)
Baltimore	68%	83%	84%	Fischer, Breakey, & Nestadt (1992)
St. Louis	57%	79%	84%	McChesney, Butterfield, & Johnson (1993)

Among the ten studies, only McChesney et al. (1993) reported family composition in such a way that it can be directly compared to 1990 census figures for cities. In that study, a comparison of the composition of homeless families to the composition of St. Louis family households with children under 18 living under the poverty line showed that married-couple (7.9 percent vs. 14.6 percent) and single-male-headed households (2.8 percent vs. 4.4 percent) were underrepresented, while single-mother-headed families (89.3 percent vs. 81.0 percent) were overrepresented among homeless families.

Similar comparisons city by city make sense of the apparent regional variation in family composition. For example, in Baltimore and St. Louis, although married-couple-headed families constitute about 45 percent of all families with children under 18, they make up only 11 percent and 15 percent of all poor families. Thus, the finding of low percentages of homeless married-couple families in Baltimore and St. Louis is hardly surprising. In contrast, in Los Angeles, 66 percent of families with children under 18 and 44 percent of poor families with children are headed by married couples. Accordingly, it makes sense that Wood et al. (1990b) reported much higher percentages of couples in their homeless sample (47 percent) than did researchers working in eastern or midwestern cities.

It has often been assumed that minority and single-mother families are significantly overrepresented among homeless families. This miniature meta-analysis suggests that this may be so for some cities, but that in others, race/ethnicity and family composition of homeless families may not be significantly different from that of the general population of poor families. Presumably, this varies with the structural characteristics of cities.

Characteristics of Homeless Mothers Accompanied by Children

When researchers examine the characteristics of homeless families and the adults who head them, they are usually doing so with the intent not just to describe the population but to look at causation. Given that the shortage of affordable housing is severe enough that some households will, of necessity, become homeless, the question is, "Which ones?" What conditions or circumstances render a family less able to compete in the scramble for housing?

Of course, the bottom line is money—the less money a household has, the less likely that it will be able to compete in the housing market. Among the single homeless, there are three major sets of problems that result in extreme poverty and homelessness: psychiatric disability, substance abuse, and a history of jail or prison (Fischer & Breakey, 1991). Persons with severe psychiatric disability or a substance abuse disorder are typically too functionally impaired to be able to work, and people with a jail or prison history are typically unable to get employers to hire them. There is also a group who are too ill or physically disabled to be able to work. (There is considerable overlap among these groups—persons who have two or more problems, for example, both a psychiatric disability and a substance abuse disorder.) Homeless single women usually have higher rates of psychiatric disability, whereas homeless single men have higher rates of substance

abuse and jail or prison history (Crystal, 1984; Fischer & Breakey, 1991).

The rest of the single homeless—persons who are not psychiatrically disabled, physically disabled, or substance abusing and who do not have a history of jail or prison—are often called "situationally homeless" (Crystal, 1984). In essence, they are casualties of the economy. In the competition for work, they do not have the skills and education that employers want and so are unable to find work. Some of the people in all of these groups are prevented from becoming homeless by safety-net programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but those who are ineligible for safety-net programs or who are unable to gain access to such programs, even though eligible, become homeless.

Thus, in an effort to understand family homelessness, researchers typically have examined factors that have been important to understanding homelessness among single adults, such as the prevalence of psychiatric disability, substance abuse, and jail or prison time. These will be reviewed first. In addition, they have looked for risk factors and circumstances that may be more specific to homeless families, including child and adult victimization, pregnancy or recent birth, and social support. These will be reviewed next.

It should be noted that most homeless family studies use the mother as the respondent and report on her characteristics. Virtually nothing is known about the characteristics of homeless single fathers, and very little is known about the men in homeless married-couple families (see McChesney, 1992b, for a brief exception) or families in which there is a male partner. Consequently, the rest of this section will discuss the characteristics of homeless mothers accompanied by children rather than the characteristics of all parents in homeless families.

Psychiatric disability. Studies comparing homeless mothers accompanied by children with housed comparison groups on measures of psychiatric disability tend to find that the homeless mothers have higher rates than the housed mothers or the general population, but that the homeless mothers have considerably lower rates than those found for homeless adults not accompanied by children. For example, using *ever hospitalized for psychiatric reasons* as an indicator of serious psychiatric disability, Burt and Cohen (1989b) found rates of eight percent for homeless women accompanied by children, in contrast to 19 percent for single men and 27 percent for single women unaccompanied by children. The implication of these findings is that, although some homeless mothers are in need of mental health care, chronic psychiatric disability, such as schizophrenia, is not a primary cause of homelessness among this group.

On the other hand, there is fairly consistent evidence that being homeless has a negative effect on mothers' day-to-day mental health. Burt and Cohen (1989b, p. 517), for example, found that 59 percent of the homeless mothers in their sample scored above the clinical cutoff on the CES-D scale (a measure of current symptoms) and that their average score was more than twice the average score for all U.S. adults.

Crack cocaine and other substance abuse. The findings on what percentage of homeless mothers were abusing drugs or alcohol varied widely, from five percent in New York City in 1988 (Knickman et al., 1989) to 50 percent in Baltimore in 1990-1991 (Fischer & Breakey, 1992). Part of this difference is undoubtedly due to differences in the methods used to measure substance abuse. Also, housing markets and shelter systems differ widely from city to city. Much of the variation from city to city and over time is probably due to the progression of the crack cocaine epidemic in the United States (Dupont, 1991; Witkin, 1991). However, all of the studies with comparison samples, except the Wood et al. (1990b) Los Angeles study, reported drug abuse was two-to-eight times higher among homeless mothers than among housed mothers. This suggests that substance abuse is a significant etiologic factor in family homelessness.

Prison history. Despite its significance among single homeless men, a prison or jail history does not seem to be an important etiologic factor for homeless mothers. Very few homeless women re-

port having ever been in state or federal prison, and homeless mothers with children are eligible for Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) regardless of their prison history.

Physical health and nutrition. Burt and Cohen (1989b) found that 40 percent of homeless mothers with children reported that their health was "fair" or "poor," as compared to 20 percent of poor adults in the United States (p. 516). They reported that "none of the homeless...on average, got enough to eat or ate diets of sufficient variety or quality to maintain good health," and they also found evidence that mothers sometimes went without food so that their children had something to eat (p. 520).

Victimization. Two studies with comparison groups, Bassuk and Rosenberg (1988) and Shinn et al. (1991) found that homeless mothers were more likely to have been physically or sexually abused in childhood than were housed mothers. On the other hand, although Wood et al. (1990b) and Goodman (1991a) found relatively high levels of childhood abuse within the homeless samples, neither group found significant differences between their homeless and housed mothers on childhood victimization. However, there is consistent evidence that homeless mothers were more likely to have been battered as adults than were housed mothers (Bassuk & Rosenberg, 1988; Fischer et al., 1992; Shinn et al., 1991; Wood et al., 1990b; Goodman, 1991a, however, found no significant differences).

Pregnancy or recent birth. Weitzman (1989, p. 176) found that homeless women in the New York City sample were significantly more likely to be pregnant (35 percent vs. 6 percent) and significantly more likely to have had a new baby within the preceding year (26 percent vs. 11 percent) than women in the housed sample. Homeless women who were pregnant or had recently given birth were also younger than other homeless mothers and were less likely to ever have been a primary tenant (Weitzman, 1989, p. 177).

Social support. Several research groups have reported evidence that homeless mothers have less social support than do comparison groups (Bassuk & Rosenberg, 1988; McChesney, 1987, 1992a; Wood et al., 1990b). Shinn et al. (1991) tested these hypotheses. They found that, in their New York City sample, whereas homeless mothers were, on the average, about six years younger than housed mothers, homeless mothers had significantly more proximate kin (and friends) and more contact with those kin (and friends) than did housed mothers. However, the homeless mothers were significantly less likely to believe that their kin and friends would take them in for more than a few days if asked. This seemed to be because the kin or friends of more than 75 percent of the homeless mothers had already housed them during the preceding year. Shinn et al. (1991) concluded that housing support from kin and friends is a crucial buffering factor in preventing or delaying homelessness, but that it can be used up. Hence, young mothers in New York City turn to the municipal shelter system after the resources of kin and friends—the "family safety net" (McChesney, 1992a)—have been depleted.

In summary, studies of homeless families in which the mother is accompanied by one or more children under the age of 18 seem consistent enough to draw two conclusions. First, these homeless families differ from the population composed of homeless single women or homeless single men. The mothers of homeless families are younger, they not only have children but have succeeded in keeping their children with them, and they are much more connected to kin and friends and, therefore, have more social support than the single homeless. They differ from single homeless men and women (unaccompanied by children) in terms of psychiatric disability (less), substance abuse (probably less), jail or prison time (less), income (more, because they are eligible for AFDC and food stamps), physical health and nutrition (better, because of AFDC and food stamps), and duration or chronicity of homelessness (less, again because, as long as they can keep their children, they are eligible for AFDC). Thus, although the jury is still out with regard to substance abuse, in other respects, most homeless families seem to be situationally homeless, as defined by Crystal (1984). Burt and Cohen (1989b) summarized their evidence supporting this conclusion—that homeless families differ from the popu-

lation of single homeless women or men—with the finding that 80 percent of women with children in their sample have no history of mental hospitalization, inpatient substance abuse treatment, or prison. By contrast, nearly half (45 percent) of the single women and 75 percent of the single men in their national sample had been institutionalized in one of these three settings.

Second, there is general support across studies of homeless mothers accompanied by minor children for a set of risk factors that make these families more vulnerable to homelessness: substance abuse (by mother or male partner), childhood victimization (sexual abuse, physical abuse, foster care, or group home placement, etc.), adult victimization (for example, battery, sexual assault), and pregnancy or recent birth. It is also clear that available social support, particularly housing support, can prevent or delay family homelessness. Of course, these risk factors are in addition to the general factors that place families with children, particularly those headed by minority single mothers, at risk for poverty.

Subgroups, or Paths Into Homelessness

Poor families will continue to become homeless in the United States until there are enough low-cost, affordable housing units to meet the needs of all poor households. Meanwhile, until that comes to pass, research on risk factors that make families vulnerable to homelessness is of little value unless it contributes toward successful interventions that prevent family homelessness. Toward that end, Hopper (1991) has said that we need to focus less on "bundles of traits" and more on "sets of circumstances... [that] distinguish the homeless from their poor but housed counterparts" (p. 18). In other words, a list of risk factors, however useful for estimating a statistical model predicting shelter use or homelessness, can only point the way toward what we really need to know. What we are really after—what we need to understand in order to prevent homelessness or to intervene successfully at the micro level, given the acute shortage of affordable housing—are the "dynamics of homelessness" (Hopper, 1991, p. 18). Another way of describing this concept is to say that we need to understand the linkages or mediating factors or mechanisms of action that connect risk factors to homelessness. For example, what is the mechanism whereby having been physically or sexually abused in childhood—a risk factor—leads to higher rates of homelessness? Two articles—Weitzman et al. (1990) and McChesney (1992b)—have suggested family typologies that either incorporate or imply mediating mechanisms. Both conclude that, just as researchers working on homelessness are in clear agreement that "the homeless" are not one undifferentiated mass, likewise, homeless families are not one homogeneous group. They also both emphasize that when we differentiate among groups of homeless families, we can better intervene on their behalf.

Using a subsample of 482 New York City mothers who had never previously stayed in a shelter (first-time homeless), Weitzman et al. (1990) divided them into three groups according to the family's living situation prior to requesting shelter: primary tenants, previously primary tenants, and never primary tenants. Alternatively, these three groups can also be seen as differing in terms of social support. Primary tenants, older mothers who typically had been primary tenants for two or more years, either had no one to turn to or had kin or friends who could only take them in for a short time, and so "knocked at the shelter door" relatively soon after leaving their apartments. Previously primary tenants typically had shared housing with kin or friends for a year or more after leaving their apartments. On the other hand, the mothers who were never primary tenants were much younger than the other two groups. Typically, they had been living with their mothers or other kin or friends. However, when they became pregnant or had a new baby, they had to move out and so turned to the shelter system.

Using intensive interview data on a small (n=80) Los Angeles sample, McChesney (1992b) described four types of families with children under age 18, according to the source of income and the characteristics of the primary earner of that income: (a) unemployed couples, (b) mothers leaving relationships, (c) AFDC mothers, and (d) mothers who had previously been homeless teenagers. The first two groups had been supported by the male partners (mostly husbands) prior to homelessness, and the

latter two groups had been supported by the mothers, mostly by means of AFDC, prior to homelessness. In unemployed couples, the husband had previously worked full-time at a job that enabled him to support the family, but after he became unemployed, the loss of income led to loss of housing. Mothers leaving relationships had been living with men who had been supporting them. However, when the mothers and children left their male partners, they simultaneously became single mothers and homeless. Most of this group were battered women. AFDC mothers had been supporting themselves for a year or more on the minimal resources of AFDC. When something happened to unbalance their household budgets, such as a rent increase or a crack cocaine addiction, they became homeless. Mothers who had previously been homeless teenagers shared a history of severe abuse in their families of origin, which typically resulted in foster home placement, from which they ran away to become homeless teenagers, supporting themselves on the street through petty theft and subsistence prostitution. With the birth of a first child, these young women became homeless mothers and eligible for AFDC—their first source of legal stable income—at the same time (McChesney, 1992b).

Although the Weitzman et al. (1990) and the McChesney (1992b) typologies of homeless families are rudimentary and preliminary, they do begin to look at mechanisms of action or mediating factors that link risk factors with homelessness. Further, the typologies suggest interventions specific to the needs of different types of families. For example, the intervention recommendations that Weitzman et al. (1990) make for their primary tenants group and that McChesney (1992b) makes for her unemployed couples group are very similar. Both say that these families primarily need affordable housing and start-up costs to enable them to move in and set up their households anew (for example, furniture, cleaning supplies). On the other hand, although McChesney's (1992b) group of mothers who were previously homeless teens is likely to be a relatively small subgroup of all homeless mothers, McChesney suggests that they would need many additional services and supports to stabilize in subsidized housing.

Effects of Homelessness on Children

Studies of homeless children typically focus on the effects of homelessness on children. Rafferty and Shinn's (1991) excellent and comprehensive review of the impact of homelessness on children has not been superceded.[1] In a literature search in mid-1992, I could find only three relevant articles (Fox, Barrnett, Davies, & Bird, 1990; Hu, Covell, Morgan, & Arcia, 1989; Lewis & Meyers, 1989) not included in their references, and none of these three articles would alter their findings in any significant way. Consequently, rather than undertaking another review of the literature on homeless children, I will summarize their findings here. Rafferty and Shinn (1991) reported on findings in five areas: health problems, hunger and poor nutrition, developmental delays, psychological problems, and educational underachievement. In addition, they theorized about how homelessness caused some of the problems observed in each of these areas.

Health and nutrition. Studies showed that homeless women as compared to housed women in New York City had significantly more babies with low birth weights and that those babies had a significantly higher infant mortality rate (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). Homeless children seen in clinics as compared to a national sample of children seen in clinics had about double the rate of elevated lead levels and hospital admission rates as children in the general population (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). Homeless children in New York City were five times more likely to have gone hungry during the preceding month (23 percent vs. four percent), in part because half of the families eligible for food stamps or for benefits from the supplemental food program Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) were not receiving them. Homeless families were also more likely than housed families to have had their AFDC cases closed (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991).

Developmental delays. Studies in New York City, St. Louis, and Massachusetts suggested that homeless children were significantly more likely to show developmental delays in all areas (for example, lan-

1. See also Molnar, Rath, and Klein (1991) for another good review, but one that was completed earlier.

guage development, motor coordination) than were children in the general population; on the other hand, several studies that compared homeless children to poor housed children found few significant differences, because both homeless and comparison samples performed poorly in comparison to children in the general population on whom the tests were normed. Rafferty and Shinn (1991) concluded that "poverty may be a key mediator of developmental problems" and noted that "despite the...literature documenting the importance of high-quality daycare services for social and intellectual stimulation," significantly fewer homeless preschoolers were enrolled in early childhood programs (p. 1173).

Psychological problems. Parents report negative behavioral changes in their children since becoming homeless. Studies using such measures as the Children's Depression Inventory, the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, and the Achenbach Behavior Problem Checklist to compare homeless and housed but poor children tend to show that more homeless than housed children have scores in the clinical range, but differences between the two groups are often nonsignificant. However, Rafferty and Shinn (1991) again found that "both homeless and poor housed children perform poorly, relative to normative samples" and conclude that "poverty, as well as specific conditions of homelessness" are implicated in the development of psychological problems (p. 1174).

Educational underachievement. Homeless children in New York City were less likely to score at or above grade level in reading or in mathematics, as measured by citywide achievement tests; they were more likely to have repeated or to be repeating grades; and their school attendance was worse than that of other New York City students (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). Non-attendance, excessive numbers of school transfers ("66 percent of [homeless New York City] families had been in at least two shelters, 29 percent in at least four, and ten percent in seven or more [shelters]"), and poor conditions in shelters were judged to be important factors in educational underachievement among homeless children (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991, p. 1176).

In summing up their findings, Rafferty and Shinn (1991) found that homeless children "experience a constellation of risks" that "compound one another" and have "a devastating impact on their well-being" (p. 1176). They concluded that "in the long run, the monetary costs of neglecting children's needs are likely to substantially exceed the costs of combating poverty and homelessness. The human costs will be much more tragic" (p. 1177). I heartily agree and suggest that their findings that, in some respects, housed but poor children perform as poorly as homeless children can only add to our level of concern.

Conclusions and Implications for Education

In summary, we have learned quite a bit about homeless families since 1980, and what we have learned can be of use to educational administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. First, we have a clear two-level model of the etiology of family homelessness. At the macro level, the basic cause of the higher levels of homelessness observed since 1980 is a shortage of housing that is affordable to the increased number of poor households. As long as there is a shortage of housing units that are affordable to the poor, there will be homeless families and homeless children. Resolving that shortage will take large amounts of money and political will, both of which are currently in short supply in the United States. This has two implications. First, unless and until these macro-level problems are resolved, there will be homeless children. In other words, the problem of homeless children in educational settings is here to stay for the near future. In addition, it is important to remember that all of the educational programs we can possibly design for homeless children will not solve the basic macro-level problems—high rates of family poverty and a shortage of affordable housing.

Second, at the micro level, there is considerable agreement on the risk factors that affect the vulnerability of poor families to homelessness, given the shortage of affordable housing. These include factors that predispose families to poverty, for example, single-mother family, minority family, and young maternal age; factors that are associated

with a higher likelihood of leaving permanent housing, for example, substance abuse, domestic violence, history of abuse and foster placement as a child, and pregnancy or recent birth; and buffering factors that can delay or prevent homelessness, such as the size and proximity of a family's kin network and levels of nonkin social support.

Third, although little is known about the characteristics of the men in married-couple or single-male-headed households with children, mothers accompanied by children have characteristics different from those of single homeless men or homeless women unaccompanied by children. Therefore, they seem to make up a homeless population separate and distinct from the population represented by homeless single women or homeless single men and should be considered as such. In other words, these mothers are not chronically mentally ill—it takes a lot to be homeless with a couple of small kids.

Fourth, just as "the homeless" are not one undifferentiated mass, homeless families are not one homogeneous group. Children and their families are homeless for different reasons, ranging from the father's unemployment to escaping domestic violence to parental drug abuse. Children in each of these situations have their special concerns. For example, children fleeing a battering father may be afraid to attend school for fear that he will be able to locate them or their mother through their attendance. Children who have been living in cars or outdoors for any length of time may have developed behaviors, such as foraging for food or hoarding food, that were adaptive under those circumstances but that may cause considerable difficulty at school. Some homeless mothers work hard to keep their children in school no matter what. Others are so overwhelmed by the problems of getting through the day that they keep children out of school to tend younger siblings or do the wash while they look for housing or go to the welfare office. Teachers and administrators need to be sensitive to the special needs and concerns of these children.

Fifth, in a comprehensive review article, Rafferty and Shinn (1991) report fairly consistent findings on the effects of homelessness on children. Homeless children have more health problems, more hunger, poorer nutrition, and more educational underachievement than housed but poor children. Results are mixed on developmental delays, and homeless children seem relatively similar to housed but poor children in terms of measurable psychological problems.

All of these children are stressed. They have lost their own clothes and possessions, have been doubled up, have moved from place to place, and have no privacy or space of their own. Their parents are often the only sameness they have left. Considering what they are going through, most of these children do astonishingly well, displaying considerable resilience in the face of adversity. School—either a special program for homeless children or a mainstreaming program—can provide some stability, order, and (flexible) structure in their lives for the duration of their homelessness. Consistency and steadiness, with the same (not frequently changing) personnel every day, are important. Teachers and teachers' aides can, in addition to a child's parent or parents, be a second source of stability—someone who is there, and there for him or her, every day. The same is true for Head Start and childcare programs for their younger siblings.

Finally, it is important to put educational services for homeless children in perspective. The fact that we have any homeless families at all in a nation as wealthy as the United States is shocking. The fact, some ten years after the problem of homeless families began to appear, we not only still have homeless families but also have institutionalized short-term emergency aid approaches without doing anything about the long-term structural problems is more appalling still. We must not become complacent; we cannot become numb to the anguish and pain that we see every day as we work with homeless children. These children and their families need not just the best we can provide them in the school setting but also our advocacy. We must work toward the twin goals of decreasing poverty and increasing affordable housing for all American families.

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One Family at a Time

McGee, Karen A. (April 1996). "One Family at a Time." *Educational Leadership*, 53 (7), 30-33. Reprinted with permission.

A literacy program for homeless families, its developers have learned, is about much more than academic pursuits. It's about human relationships.

Roz is 31. She dropped out of school at 13. At 14, she gave birth to twins. One child died, and the other she gave to her mother to raise. Over time, Roz had three more children by a husband who abused her physically. Since leaving him, she's had several boyfriends. The last boyfriend was an ex-felon who had been sent to prison for rape. Her current boyfriend is 23 and unemployed.

Roz can read simple picture books, but neither of her sons can read at all. They attend self-contained classrooms for children with mild mental disabilities. Her daughter is a special education student in sixth grade. The family lives in a trailer park that rents by the week.

When I asked Roz what she wanted from our family literacy program, she squinted her eyes, appeared to be thinking hard, and finally announced, "I just want us to be friends." I felt as if I had been hit in the chest. How could we be so far off the mark with our goal?

Our reason for starting this project was to help legally homeless parents be their children's best teachers. The research told us that most parents, regardless of their socioeconomic status, love their children and want them to have quality lives. We believed that if we could show parents some strategies to help their children read better, the children would be more successful in school. With that school success, we hoped to break the cycle of poverty by giving the children more career choices.

But it was my friendship she asked for. I sat back in my chair, studied Roz to see if she was sincere, and answered, "We can do that." It was then that I realized we needed to rethink our program. We had done our homework, but, as it turned out, we had a lot more learning to do. Roz is one of many parents who helped us reshape the project to meet the needs of their families.

Getting Started

I had long thought about helping the homeless. In fact, some of my students had been homeless. When a grant proposal crossed my desk advertising monies for literacy projects, I decided to stop talking about the homeless and do something to help them. After I obtained a one-year grant, my school district became the fiscal agent and home for the project. Juvenile Probation loaned their vans for transportation. The International Reading Association provided teachers for the children. Americorps supplied two students to be van drivers, cooks, babysitters, and general caregivers. A local foundation gave us books and tapes for the adult curriculum. The State Department of Education subsidized our child meals, and Title I gave us five adult meals per session. The $4,000 grant was to be used for food, general supply needs, salaries for teachers of the adults, and teacher training.

For advice on advertising our program, we talked with the Homeless Head Start teachers. They told us that our flyers should contain a minimum of print. They also suggested that we make face-to-face contact with the families. Thus armed with what we thought were excellent flyers, our teams hit the streets and visited the motels and trailer parks that lined West Fourth Street in Reno, Nevada.

Most of the families we visited appeared interested in our work. We talked about where and when we

would pick them up. I felt especially satisfied that I had masked my shock at the appalling living conditions I saw. My greatest worry that day was that we might not have enough space in the vans to collect all the families. I needn't have worried.

Opening day of the project arrived, and only two families were willing to attend. Some families had already moved. Most made excuses. What interesting misconceptions we had then. We thought that if we offered free literacy classes for both children and adults—combined with free food and transportation—folks would flock to us. We consoled ourselves by telling one another that it was best to start small while we worked out the kinks of a new project.

What We Envisioned

We were open for business on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m., and we regularly made the rounds of West Fourth Street to pick up any families willing to attend. In addition to meeting their literacy needs, we wanted to provide these families with a warm meal and two hours in a safe place. We were housed in an unused classroom that we'd tidied up. One family came consistently, and the mother recruited for us. She brought new children, but she couldn't coax their parents to come.

Disappointed with the small turnout, we contacted the only family homeless center in town to see whether we could include those families in our work. Because the shelter is a family emergency relief shelter, the average length of stay is seven days. This policy forced us to look again at our adult curriculum. If we could expect to see the adults only once or twice, we had to make the most of our time with them.

We based our literacy program around Prop Boxes, based on the model by Susan Neuman of Temple University.[1] Each box has a theme, such as food or farm animals, and contains (1) a song, rap, or poem; (2) at least four books; (3) literacy props such as puppets and flannel board pieces; and (4) several writing extensions.

First, we planned to teach the adults the easily memorizable poem, rap, or song so that they would feel immediate success. Next, we would explain how allowing their children to play with literacy props after hearing stories and songs would make the children more likely to reenact or retell those stories themselves. During this lighthearted time, we also hoped to build the background knowledge that the parents would need to read the books successfully with their children. We had chosen the books—simple fiction stories, predictable nonfiction texts, and poetry—to demonstrate that we read for different purposes.

Then, we would teach the parents how writing extensions encourage children, after hearing a story, to respond in a literary way. One child might simply draw a picture of his favorite part of the story. Another might write a simple story of her own, imitating the one read. Behaving as a writer is as desirable as behaving as a reader; both are important pre-literate behaviors.

Our intent was to separate the adults and the children for the first hour so that the adults could learn useful teaching tips while practicing using the boxes themselves. After dinner, the parents would partner with their own children to practice their newly learned skills.

What Really Happened

In reality, however, most of our parents spent a large part of that first hour just talking to the teachers—about their living conditions, their children, their relationships, and problems with the law.

Quite academically, the adult teachers realized that asking the parents to help make the literacy props provided an ideal way to share teaching tips with them. Reading the books, then, became less embarrassing for individual parents. Rather than merely practice reading aloud, the parents could read the books as a group to discover what kinds of props might work best for kids. Human relationships and parenting in general seemed to take precedence over literacy issues in our evolving project.

1. S. Newman, (October 1995), "Reading Together: A Community-Supported Parent Tutoring Program," *The Reading Teacher* 49, 2.

In the adjoining children's area, our volunteer teachers facilitated projects centered around either a theme or a book. For example, one teacher read a piece of fiction about a dinosaur to stimulate a discussion about dinosaur truths and myths. After exploring a bag of pretend dinosaur eggs, the children pored over nonfiction books about dinosaurs and then colored and cut out pictures of their favorite ones. While the children were cutting, the teacher wrote a chart-story eliciting from the children possible things that dinosaurs might do if they lived today.

Meanwhile, the two student helpers and I prepared dinner, using hot plates, crockpots, and a microwave oven to try to simulate cooking in a motel room. We used a tablecloth and always asked the older children to help us by cutting fruits and vegetables or setting the table. They seemed to really enjoy creating a nice meal for everyone. Perhaps this was a new experience for them or a valued one from earlier, happier days. Either way, dinner time was an important aspect of the evening for these children.

Afterward, the older children were eager to play games or do puzzles with one another. The younger children seemed content to look at books. Their parents either wanted to sit and talk or go outside to smoke. Coaxing the parents to work with their own children did prove successful in this environment.

Keeping the project alive with limited funds and staff proved difficult—and at times exhausting—but our commitment was strong, and community response, heartwarming.

A local business delivered a used refrigerator. A relative of mine sent a generous check for the purchase of cooking supplies, games, books, and art supplies. A retired women's group knitted caps and scarves for our children. Several teachers sent cash donations for extra food. People in the Curriculum and Instruction Division of our school district supported our project by supplying apples, oranges, raisins, crackers, and other foods easily carried by homeless families. At Christmas time, they brought presents for all our children. To keep dinner on the table, we also solicited food from local businesses. (Two bakeries regularly gave us bread and muffins.)

Living and Learning

Over a year's time, we met many homeless families. Our bulletin board—filled with children's artwork and family photos—was a testament to their attendance, if only for a short while. On any one Monday or Wednesday night, we'd transport three or four parents and from three-to-eight children, ages 2-15, to and from our makeshift classroom.

What did we discover along the way? For one, it is important to provide food in a program for homeless families, especially shelter children. Regular meals are not a given in their unpredictable lives. It doesn't have to be fancy food, but there must be enough of it. We encouraged our families to help themselves to all the food we'd prepared and sent any leftovers home with the motel families.

We also learned how to improve our advertising strategy after attending a Family Literacy Workshop with Carol Talon of California State Libraries. In designing our flyers, we'd overlooked the idea that minimally literate adults probably had poor school experiences. All the freebies in the world could not coax them to return to an environment where they felt unsuccessful. Carol suggested that we never use the words reading, writing, or literacy in our recruiting efforts. We promptly changed our name to Family Fun Night and made reading books one piece of the fun.

Perhaps our most important discovery was that human relationships must precede academic pursuits. Only if our parents trust and believe in us, do we stand a chance of teaching them anything. To earn their trust, we had to accept them for who they were. At times, this meant overlooking actions we disagreed with—for example, a mother spending money on cigarettes to the neglect of her child's need for food. But values such as these were not ours to question or change, so we focused on our families' strengths.

So many memories come to mind. One shelter mom carried a backpack full of toys and art supplies so that her sons with Attention Deficit Disorder would always have something constructive to do. Another shelter mom reassured her son that as long as they had each other to love, they would be all right. A motel mom worried about getting her paperwork in order so that her five-year-old could begin school. We were dealing with survivors, and we had to admire their strength.

These homeless parents did care about their children, but they also had needs that had to be met. Building time into each evening just to talk was the most critical element of our program. We didn't touch a lot of peoples' lives, and we have no way of knowing how large an impact we made. But we cared, and we believe that people responded to our caring.

Roz might tell you that now she thinks we are her friends. And I think that Roz's children and the other children we worked with might say that they can't distinguish between the living experience and the learning experience.

A recent letter from a former motel mom who has relocated to Salt Lake City warmed our hearts.

> *We have just completed 130 hours with Habitat and hopefully will find out soon which house will be ours. We are excited about moving into our own home. Everyone is doing so well in school, but they still miss their friends in Reno. The Family Nights were great for us. We spend more time reading together and dreaming up new ideas for our boxes. God bless all of you. We are closer now, thanks to Reading Nights.*

The continuing challenge is to reach out to more of the families of West Fourth Street and engender the same trust. I am reminded of "One at a Time" by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen. In the story, a boy walks up and down the beach throwing starfish back into the ocean. When a friend tells him that he can't possibly make a difference because there are too many starfish to rescue, the boy picks up yet another starfish, tosses it out to sea, and replies, "Made a difference to that one!"

Of course, we would like to see programs in place to assist every homeless family, but for now we must be content with helping one family at a time.

Author's Note: After our one-year grant ended, the Family Literacy Project was reborn as the Children in Transition Program. Established by the Washoe County School District with a Title I grant, this program tries to eliminate barriers to the education of homeless children and youth. Program staff work with homeless advocates from each of the district's 76 elementary, middle, and high schools. They collaborate with local social service agencies to locate homeless families and then with district transportation, nutrition, health, and personnel services to enroll students in school and to ensure that they receive needed services.

Creating a Community of Learning for Homeless Children

Nunez, Ralph da Costa & Kate Collignon (October 1997). "Creating a Community of Learning for Homeless Children." *Educational Leadership,* 55 (2), 56-60. Reprinted with permission.

By 1997, more than one million American children were homeless, moving between shelters and overcrowded or inadequate housing. Of these, more than 750,000 were school-aged, and the overwhelming majority performed well below grade level (Education for Homeless Children, 1994; Nunez, 1996).

These children are at risk of far more than academic failure. Plagued by domestic violence, family substance abuse, parental uninvolvement, and the psychological devastation of homelessness, they need more than help with their homework: they need a safe haven where they will receive the educational and emotional support to keep them from falling farther into the cracks of society.

Many U.S. public schools provide academic assistance for homeless children, but only a handful of innovative model programs—whether functioning as shelters within schools or schools within shelters—provide comprehensive approaches to education. They have established "communities of learning" by incorporating referrals to adult education and family support services into *specialized*—rather than special—education for children. By broadening our vision beyond traditional children's education, we can learn from these models and effectively break the cycles of poverty and homelessness to ensure that the next generation will succeed.

Educational Pitfalls Facing Homeless Children

Homeless children face monumental obstacles in their pursuit of education. They lag far behind other children, both educationally and developmentally (Molnar et al., 1991; Rafferty, 1991, 1995; Bassuk and Rubin, 1987). Although all children in poverty fare similarly, homeless children face seemingly insurmountable logistical problems and emotional and psychological pressures.

The most visible hindrances to homeless children's education are the obstacles to enrollment and participation created by movement to and residence in a shelter. While allowed by law to continue at the school they attended before becoming homeless, many children end up in shelters so far from their previous home that they must choose between transferring schools or spending hours commuting. At new schools, the traumatized families face an obstacle course of residency, guardianship, and immunization requirements; inadequate record-keeping systems; and a lack of continuity of programs like special education and gifted education. For most homeless families, this happens two or three times during the school year (Rafferty, 1991; Anderson et al., 1995).

Even after enrollment, homeless children struggle to reorient themselves to new schools, teachers, classmates, and curriculums, and teachers are forced to reassess their new students' skill levels and needs. Often, teachers do not even know that their students are homeless. Even if they do, few teachers are trained in the special needs of homeless children. Homeless students are frequently left out of extended class projects and are three times more likely to be recommended for special education programs than their peers—and many never escape (Nunez, 1996).

These impediments only hint at the devastation to a child's education caused by the psychological

impact of homelessness. The loss of a home robs a child of the familiarity and sense of place that most people take for granted. At school, classmates are quick to ridicule homeless children, adding stigma to the displacement homeless children suffer.

What about the parents? The average homeless parent–a young single mother with one or two children–reads at or below the sixth-grade level and left school by the tenth grade. Many parents feel alienated from school, and most are unable to reinforce school lessons. A constant crisis mode leaves parents no room for long-term goals, such as education and stability. As a result, most homeless children fail to attend school regularly. One study found that homeless children in New York City had missed an average of three weeks of school even before entering the shelter system (Nunez, 1996). To help homeless children and their families move beyond the crises of homelessness, we must provide not just specialized tutoring but also a safe place, stability, and direct services. The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program of the 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act has taken significant steps toward ensuring equal access to public education for homeless children. But much remains to be done.

Communities of Learning

Schools must work to ameliorate the barriers to school attendance and participation, as well as the environmental conditions that fail to support–or at worst, sabotage–a child's education. Model programs have combined the educational expertise of schools with the experience and services of shelters into school- or shelter-based communities of learning.

Communities of learning immerse children in an environment of education, while enabling them to see their parents embracing learning as well and to receive the basic care that schools usually assume children receive at home. A community of learning includes the following:

- Specialized education for homeless children
- Contextualized education for parents
- Linkages to needed services

The educational curriculums for children at these centers incorporate traditional techniques used for special education but do not replace regular school attendance. The centers work to accommodate the frequent and unpredictable disruptions in participation common among homeless children from the educational mainstream.

Again, what about the parents? Many homeless parents are embarrassed by their lack of literacy skills and feel humiliated by memories of academic failure. By addressing the educational needs of parents, we can encourage parental involvement and pave the way to much-needed stability. Here are some guidelines for an adult education curriculum:

- Be basic enough to help those with even the lowest literacy skills.
- Be flexible to accommodate the same unpredictable participation rates that plague homeless children.
- Be relevant to a parent's day-to-day life.
- Be provided in a one-on-one or workshop format–anything to avoid negative associations with previous classroom-based experiences.

Model Programs

The Brownstone School, operated by Homes for the Homeless at the Prospect Family Inn in the Bronx, is a shelter-based after-school program that takes an accelerated–rather than remedial–approach to helping homeless children address specific academic difficulties while keeping up with their peers. The Brownstone provides one-on-one tutoring, homework help, and creative educational activities that are organized around themes to provide continuity from one day to the next. The tutors modify these activities for multiple skill levels and offer them in brief cycles to accommodate new students who arrive at the shelter (Nunez, 1994).

At the Prospect Family Inn, adult education begins with basic literacy workshops. In these, parents read, write, and talk about parenting, health and nutrition, stress management, budgeting, housing,

and apartment maintenance. Many parents attend an alternative high school on site at the shelter that prepares them to receive their General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Parents then attend employment workshops and qualify for internships and placement. Parents' participation in these programs and children's participation in Brownstone and on-site daycare supplement parenting and literacy training with the opportunity for parents and children to read and spend time together in a structured and safe place (Nunez, 1994).

Yet, homeless parents and children cannot be expected to make education their priority so long as they must continue to worry about where they will be sleeping the next night or when an abuser will resurface. Communities of learning must attend to these other issues.

Such attention begins by providing for basic needs. The Recovering the Gifted Child Academy, a public alternative middle school in Chicago founded by Corla "Momma Hawk" Hawkins to serve children who come from poverty (and many from homelessness), maintains a "survival kit," including clean underwear, socks, deodorant, toothpaste, and toothbrushes for any student who needs them. The Academy also offers three meals a day for its students—operating on the assumption that no assumptions can be made about what children are provided with outside of school (Pool and Hawk, 1997). Once these basic needs are attended to, communities of learning still must attend to less visible needs, such as the effects of domestic violence and substance abuse. Teachers can listen when children want to talk, be prepared to discuss personal issues, and provide resources and referrals for specialized counseling and direct services.

Housing referrals and placement are critical needs. The Benjamin Franklin Day Elementary School—"B.F. Day"—a public school in Seattle with a high percentage of homeless students and a specialized program to meet their needs, acts as a liaison between landlords and families to ensure that buildings in undesirable neighborhoods do not fall into disrepair, but remain occupied and maintained by families (Quint, 1994).

Community and School Partnerships

Communities of learning must establish lines of communication between schools and community-based organizations. This common thread of communication and collaboration unites the efforts of model programs to make them successful. Yet, this critical step in providing a safe haven for homeless children is the piece most often missing from many programs.

Although schools are legally responsible for making sure that homeless children receive the special educational attention they need, lack of understanding of the needs of homeless children among school administrators and staff has left the few existing programs woefully inadequate. On the other hand, the few shelters and community-based organizations offering children's education programs have difficulty in implementing educational curriculums. Even when children's education, adult education, and family support are well provided within one environment or the other, the lack of communication between schools and shelters impedes the education of homeless children. Schools often lose track of students making frequent moves, and shelter programs fail to reach children who are *almost* homeless—who are being shuttled between the apartments of family and friends.

Both schools *and* shelters hold a treasury of institutional expertise and resources necessary to provide effective programs for homeless children. To make the best use of all these resources, schools must work with community-based organizations and shelters to develop their own communities of learning. Here are three important steps to follow:

1. Identify community resources and their locations.
2. Develop an information-sharing relationship between schools and these organizations. At a minimum, this relationship should facilitate the education of school administrators and staff about the presence and specific needs of homeless children.
3. Update administrators of both schools and shelters on progress and developments within their

programs to ensure that the programs are complementary, not conflicting.

Even such basic communication can make a significant difference in the life of a homeless child. In South Bend, Indiana, children residing at the Center for the Homeless shelter would get on the school bus at the stop in front of the shelter to taunts and jeers by their non-homeless classmates. Open lines of communication between the shelter and the school district made it possible to alter the route of the bus to make the shelter the first stop in the morning and last in afternoon so that no students would be identified as "shelter kids."

From this information-sharing relationship, collaboration develops. The B.F. Day School developed a relationship with the Mercer Island United Methodist Church, which provided volunteers to assist in moving families into permanent housing and to collect and distribute household items. Volunteers also assisted parents with household maintenance, budgeting, and cooking. Then, other partnerships emerged. For example, a clinic sent a physician's assistant to the school every Monday to examine children and provide immunizations and prescriptions (Quint, 1994).

In other school/community collaborations, schools have provided services on site at shelters. The Alternative High Schools, a New York City public preparatory and vocational training program for teen parents and high school dropouts, agreed to establish a branch at the Prospect Family Inn so that homeless parents attend class among familiar faces, rather than traveling across town and getting involved in yet another bureaucracy (Nunez, 1994).

The ultimate goal of this collaboration is seamless integration of children's education, adult education, and support services, making full use of school and shelter resources to establish effective communities of learning either in schools or in shelters. Thus, homeless children already living in shelters can receive the educational assistance they need to avoid returning to the shelters as adults, and children on the verge of homelessness can be linked to the services their families need to keep from having to enter a shelter.

Perhaps the greatest example is set by the Homeless Children and Families Program in the Salem Keizer public school system in Oregon. In addition to identifying homeless students and ensuring that these children have continuous access to schooling, the program has become involved in the activities of five local family shelters to engage the parents of homeless children in education and case management services. Program staff members serve as a bridge between the schools and shelters. They work with homeless children while they are in school and then go to local shelters to provide after-school and preschool enrichment programs for the children and case management, referrals, and life-skills classes for their parents.

An Opportunity for Action

The challenge that faces our schools is less a mandate to stretch underfunded services still further and more an opportunity to fulfill their potential as the spine of society. Schools have the greatest ongoing contact with all members of the community—children, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, neighbors—and the ability to steer the direction of lives through supportive measures. By addressing children's needs through collaboration with local service providers, schools have the power to make a difference not only for homeless children in shelters but also for families on the verge of homelessness. Indeed, it is ironic that out of the problems of homeless children, solutions have developed that meet the needs of many children at risk of educational neglect.

Though the goal of communities of learning is to educate children, the process must first focus on educating the educators. Every school administrator and teacher must understand that childhood homelessness is not something that flares up only during periods of media attention. We must recognize that the boy or girl who acted up in math class may be missing far more than the principles of long division. Only then will all children—homeless and otherwise—receive both the educational and developmental support they need from schools.

Individual schools can make a difference in their district, and individual teachers can make a

difference in their schools. By learning about the needs of homeless children and accepting the opportunity to take responsibility for more than a child's grades, individual educators can begin the collaborative approaches needed to develop a community of learning.

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Reaching the Hard to Reach: Educating Homeless Adolescents in Urban Settings

Powers, Jane L. & Jaklitsch, Barbara (1993). "Reaching the Hard to Reach: Educating Homeless Adolescents in Urban Settings." *Education and Urban Society*, 25, 394-409. Reprinted with permission.

At some point in time, all adolescents are expected to leave home. Separating from one's parents and preparing for independence are central developmental tasks of adolescence and essential aspects of becoming an adult in our society. Two settings provide skills that facilitate this transition: home and school. Currently, an alarming number of young people in urban areas throughout the United States are deprived of the opportunity to develop these skills because they have prematurely left home and joined the ranks of the burgeoning homeless population. Whether they have chosen to or, in some circumstances, have been forced to leave home, the consequences of homelessness can be devastating for young people, for cities, and for society. Ill-equipped to combat the perils of street life and live independently, homeless adolescents are easily victimized and exploited. To survive, many street youth resort to prostitution, drug trafficking, and other forms of criminal activity (Janus, McCormack, Burgess, & Hartman, 1987). Homeless adolescents are at risk for a wide range of serious physical and mental health problems, including substance abuse (Robertson, 1989; Windle, 1989; Yates, MacKenzie, Pennbridge, & Cohen, 1988), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) (Pennbridge, Yates, David, & Mackenzie, 1990; Robertson, 1991b; Rotheram-Borus, Koopman, & Erhardt, 1991), premature pregnancy and parenthood (American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs [AMA], 1989; Edelman & Mihaly, 1989), and suicide (Shaffer & Caton, 1984; Yates et al., 1988). Yet, despite their large numbers and the desperateness of their situation, these youth have remained largely invisible and underserved. In this article, we will explore one area in which services for homeless adolescents have been notably lacking, namely, education. We will focus on the barriers to educating homeless adolescents, particularly those in urban settings, where the numbers of such youth are greater, the survival risks are higher, and the service needs are more profound than in other communities in which these young people reside.

Impact of Homelessness on Education

Education is severely affected by the experience of homelessness (Rafferty, 1991; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). Most homeless adolescents do not attend school; those who do are frequently absent, fall behind in their performance, and eventually drop out (Ely, 1987; Levine, Metzendorf, & Van Boskirk, 1986; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989). Rather than offering opportunities for learning and growth, schools are viewed as a place of humiliation and failure. The resulting lack of basic skills may be the most serious problem facing homeless youth, for it results in their being unprepared for jobs that require a minimum of a high school diploma. The lack of

education and training can have lifelong consequences for these adolescents, limiting their future employment opportunities as well as their integration into society (Bucy, 1987; Janus et al., 1987). Acknowledging the importance of educating the homeless, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (1987) established a national policy requiring each state educational agency to provide homeless children and youth with access to a free and appropriate public education. Very few states, however, have developed programs and services for the education of homeless adolescents (see, for example, Zeldin & Bogart, 1990). Further, those educational services that do exist are designed to meet the needs of younger homeless children, from kindergarten through eighth grade, while older youth of high school age are virtually ignored. The programmatic focus on younger homeless children may reflect compulsory school attendance laws for youth under age 16; however, this results in the neglect of the educational needs of older homeless youth.

Definitional Issues

Who Are Homeless Adolescents?

The population of homeless youth has been referred to variously as *runaways, throwaways, pushouts, system kids, street kids, unaccompanied youth, damaged teens, outcasts,* and *hard-to-serve youth* (Robertson, 1991b). Although frequently used interchangeably, both in the empirical literature and in the media, there are important distinctions in this terminology that have policy and educational implications.

Adolescents become homeless for a variety of reasons. Although some are part of homeless families, the vast majority are unaccompanied youth who live independently of their families. Of these, some were forced to separate when their parents became homeless because they were unable to find family shelter facilities (Foscarinas, 1987). The few shelters that do serve families often do not accept older children, particularly adolescent boys, who are considered disruptive to other residents (Children's Defense Fund, 1988; U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1987).

The federal government differentiates *runaway* from *homeless youth* in the following way: a runaway is a person under the age of 18 who has been away from his or her home or legal residence at least overnight, without the permission of parent or guardian (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989). The runaway has chosen to leave and has a home to which he or she can return. A homeless youth, in contrast, has no shelter and needs services providing supervision and care (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989). Sometimes referred to as *throwaways*, these youth often have been rejected, abandoned, and forced to leave home by their families with the intention that they not return (Bucy, 1987; Hier, Koorboot, & Schweitzer, 1990; Nye & Edelbrock, 1980). The distinction between runaway and homeless youth often gets blurred. It is well documented that a substantial number of runaways leave home because of violent and abusive situations (Farber, Kinast, McCoard, & Falker, 1984; Kurtz, Jarvis, & Kurtz, 1991; Powers, Eckenrode, & Jaklitsch, 1990). Studies have found that as many as 60 percent of the young people served by shelters experienced severe abuse prior to running away (for example, National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, 1988). Although perhaps initially a runaway, some youth then find themselves alone, without a home to which to return. Foster care agencies and the child welfare system have been criticized for their role in creating homeless youth (Ferran & Sabatini, 1985; Raychaba, 1989). A large number of youth living on the streets are considered system kids because they have spent years in foster care or substitute care, where they may have experienced frequent disruptions and a cycle of multiple placements (Cook, 1986; Festinger, 1983). Sometimes labeled the *doubly homeless*, these young people have had extensive, frequently negative experiences with helping agencies (Kurtz et al., 1991). Often these youth have had few opportunities to establish meaningful relationships with any adult and possess few independent living skills, yet they eject themselves prematurely from placement and run to the streets unprepared to survive.

Scope of the Problem

Definitional issues are important in estimating the scope of the problem of youth homelessness. It is difficult to obtain an accurate count of this hidden and transient population: those attempts that have been made are imprecise and reflect the use of different definitions, varied methods of generating the estimates, and a lack of centralized reporting (Robertson, 1991b). A recent study on missing children conducted by the U.S Justice Department found that at least 500,000 youth under age 18 become runaways and throwaways each year (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990). Other estimates suggest that at least one million (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1984; Solarz, 1988) and perhaps as many as two or three million youth between the ages of ten and 17 are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, or in "welfare" hotels (National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, 1988). These numbers must be viewed as conservative estimates because they exclude the youth whose families have not reported them as missing and who have not sought help from shelters, schools, or human service agencies. An undetermined number of runaway and homeless youth do not use community services and never come to the attention of public authorities or service agencies (Canton, 1986).

Implications for Educators

The distinctions between the various subgroups of the homeless youth population have important implications for educators. Whereas runaways may have viable families to which they may return, truly homeless youth do not. Those youth who do not return home have greater service needs because they are disconnected from supportive family and adults and are at higher risk for exploitation by adults, substance abuse, and delinquency. Kurtz et al. (1991) found that homeless adolescents experienced more serious problems than runaways in all areas, including education. In comparison to runaways, homeless youth had substantially more school problems, were less likely to attend school regularly, and were more likely to drop out.

The length of time that a young person has been homeless should be considered in determining educational needs. The longer a young person has been on the street, the greater the likelihood she or he will be exploited and become involved in criminality (White, 1989; Yates et al., 1988). Increased longevity on the streets also makes it harder to reach and serve these youth. Young people who become homeless as adolescents may have experienced educational disruption only recently and may not require as much remediation as youth who have experienced several years of intermittent homelessness. Because the latter are likely to have had more extensive educational disruption, they will have a greater need for services. The emerging group of younger adolescents who have been homeless for most of their lives are at greatest risk for educational failure and will require more intensive services to compensate for years of educational neglect.

Age of the young person is another important factor for educators working with homeless youth. Most states have status offender laws for young people under the age of 16 that deal with truant and runaway behavior. Young people under age 16 are legally required to attend school. When such youths become chronic truants, the juvenile and family court systems often become involved. Status offender laws provide educators with more leverage for bringing chronic runaway and truant youth back into formal schooling. Older homeless youth (that is, age 16 or above) are not legally required to be in school. These youth require a different approach, one with more motivational incentives, to encourage their return to formal education.

Educational Barriers

A variety of barriers make it difficult for homeless adolescents to attend school. Even if motivated to attend, homeless youth often are denied access to education because they lack a permanent address or do not live with their families (Bucy, 1987). The lack of proper documents, such as proof of immunization, grade reports, and special education evaluations often required for registration can also make

it difficult for young people to attend school. Unaccompanied homeless youth face greater obstacles in obtaining official records because they are not likely to possess the necessary identification documents or the information required to obtain them. Estranged guardians may not be available to or capable of providing the necessary documents. Some states even require students to be registered in school by a legal parent or guardian or require a parent's signature to reenroll students after they have been suspended or dropped out (Ely, 1987; Stronge & Tenhouse, 1990). Lack of clothing and supplies, inadequate health care services, and transportation problems also make public education less accessible to homeless youth (Rafferty, 1991). Although schools have become increasingly sensitized to the plight of the homeless in recent years, many do not have the resources to offer special services for helping these youth continue their education.

The breakdown of community life in many urban settings creates an additional barrier to educating homeless youth. In previous years, when young people were either homeless or at risk of homelessness because of family difficulties, the community often provided a secondary "safety net," either through informal support (for example, friends or relatives) or through community-based services. Such support provided sufficient stability for many urban homeless youth either to continue with school or to obtain alternative educational services. Currently, however, many communities are experiencing such a degree of deterioration and depletion of resources that the safety net is gone or has been vastly diminished.

In addition to the barriers that prevent homeless adolescents from attending school, other problems interfere with the capacity of these youth to learn, thereby making it difficult for educators to provide services. It is important to understand the unique problems faced by homeless adolescents to plan for and more effectively meet their educational needs. Some of the more crucial educational hurdles are discussed below.

Street Life

Although the problem of youth homelessness has been increasing in rural and suburban areas across the United States, our cities contain the greatest concentration of these young people. A distinctive feature of urban homelessness is the powerful street-life culture that lures young people into a lifestyle of violence and criminality. The street provides a strong sense of identity for homeless youth. Survival on the street may result in increased status, power, and money. The "industries of street survival," including trafficking of drugs and lethal weapons, prostitution, and other criminal activity, can be very destructive to young people. Many homeless adolescents become involved in these industries as a means to support themselves and quickly learn that they can earn a large amount of money in a short amount of time (Cohen, 1987; Janus et al., 1987). Reaching homeless youth in urban areas poses enormous challenges to service providers and educators because it is harder to pull young people off the streets if they have become entrenched in a lifestyle of criminality. If they are not reached in time, young people lose the capacity to envision life beyond street culture. The incentives to go to school are minimal in light of the rewards of the street. It is not an easy task to motivate young people to abandon the street, where they perceive themselves as being successful, especially to enter the classroom, where they may have already experienced failure.

Substance Abuse

The street-life environment is one in which alcoholism and substance abuse are considered the norm and are an integral part of daily existence. The availability of a wide range of drugs is one factor that leads to a high prevalence of substance abuse (Price, 1989; Robertson, 1991a; Windle, 1989). The widespread use of crack cocaine among homeless adolescents frequently forces them into criminal activity to sustain their habit. Drug involvement clearly has ramifications for educating homeless adolescents. Extensive drug use may result in a young person's not attending school at all. The effect of drugs and alcohol on those who do attend severely diminishes their ability to focus, comprehend, and learn.

Living Conditions

Living conditions in subway tunnels, abandoned cars and buildings, and welfare hotels are not conducive to survival, let alone education. Beyond mere provision of shelter, a home affords young people the stability and safety that are vital for their healthy growth and development. For the few homeless youth who manage to attend school, poor living conditions can interfere with their ability to concentrate in the classroom and keep up with their schoolwork. Teachers report that homeless children and youth come to school hungry, poorly dressed, depressed, unprepared, and exhausted because they cannot sleep at night in the shelters (Edelman & Mihaly, 1989). Adolescents are particularly prone to the stigma attached to being homeless. Because adolescents are highly sensitive to issues relating to body image and appearance, improper hygiene, inadequate clothing, and physical unattractiveness can have a devastating impact on these youth. Rather than face ostracism and ridicule from their peers, many young people either choose not to go to school or remain as anonymous as possible.

Health Problems

Untreated medical problems among homeless youth are well documented (American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs, 1989; Robertson, 1989; Yates et al., 1988). Studies have shown that homeless children experience more health problems and illnesses (for example, upper respiratory infections, ear disorders, and gastrointestinal disorders) than those in the general population. These problems often occur at double the rate observed in a general pediatric caseload (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). AIDS is by far the most serious medical problem facing homeless adolescents, among whom the rate of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is significantly higher than that reported for other populations of adolescents in the United States (Rotheram-Borus et al., 1991). The high levels of intravenous drug use, involvement in prostitution, and gay and bisexual lifestyles place homeless adolescents at high risk for exposure to, and transmission of, the HIV virus (Pennbridge et al., 1990; Robertson, 1991b; Yates et al., 1988).

Homeless females face special problems because of their vulnerability to early pregnancy and parenthood. Homelessness endangers the health and well-being of pregnant and parenting teens and their unborn children. Pregnant teens who are homeless are among the highest-risk group for low-birth-weight babies and high infant mortality rates because of their poor health and nutritional habits and the likelihood that they have not received prenatal care (Sullivan & Damrosch, 1987). Difficulties in obtaining health care and housing, high mobility, unstable living arrangements, and the lack of childcare services make it difficult for teen parents to attend school (Edelman & Mihaly, 1989).

Family Background

Homeless adolescents tend to come from highly dysfunctional and deteriorated families that manifest high levels of parental substance abuse, domestic violence, chronic medical and mental health problems, and welfare dependency (Ferran & Sabatini, 1985; Price, 1989; Rotheram-Borus et al., 1991). Only 20-25 percent of street youth report that their families are intact; most have been raised in single-parent families and may have had multiple parent figures because of divorce, death, or desertion (Farber et al., 1984; Janus et al., 1987; Powers et al., 1990). In many cases, the homes in which these young people spent their early childhood provided no supervision because the parents themselves were incapacitated by crack, AIDS, or poverty. Many homeless youth are subjected to continuous abuse by their parents and other adult family members (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989; Kufeldt & Nimmo, 1987; Powers et al., 1990) and have experienced an extraordinarily high incidence of family substance abuse. Shaffer and Caton (1984) identified considerable family pathology in their study of sheltered New York City youth: three out of five had a parent with a history of either drug or alcohol abuse or criminality. Dysfunctional family backgrounds compounded by the external stressors of street life cause homeless adolescents to exhibit a wide range of behavioral and emotional problems that interfere with their ability and motivation to learn.

Developmental Lags

Significant developmental delays that have been observed among homeless young children in the areas of cognitive ability, language development, motor skills, and social interaction place them at risk for academic failure (Bassuk & Rubin, 1987; Fox, Barrnett, Davies, & Bird, 1990; Molnar, 1988; Molnar, Rath, & Klein, 1990; Rescorla, Parker, & Stolley, 1991). As a consequence of being homeless, adolescents are also likely to fall behind developmentally, thereby diminishing their life choices and placing them at risk for not completing the normal tasks of adolescence, such as forming a strong sense of identity (Young, Godfrey, Matthews, & Adams, 1983). Prolonged periods of absence or repeated school transfers result in discontinuous instruction that requires remedial services to address academic deficits. Because of their inability to adapt to a normal classroom, some young people may drop out or be expelled before they receive adequate special education testing and assistance.

Emotional and Psychological Problems

The experience of being homeless may cause young people to feel confused, insecure, and out of control. Life on the streets is often violent, unpredictable, and chaotic. In these conditions, learning can be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Emotional distress and psychiatric problems are three times more common among homeless adolescents than among the general adolescent population (Robertson, 1991b). Shaffer and Caton (1984) found that homeless youth had a profile very similar to that of an outpatient adolescent psychiatric population. Some of the more severe emotional and psychological problems observed among homeless adolescents that interfere with education are described below.

Depression. Researchers have found that depression is one of the most common psychological effects of adolescent homelessness (Mundy, Robertson, Roberts, & Greenblatt, 1990; Shaffer & Caton, 1984; Yates et al., 1988). Anxiety and depression can interfere with the capacity to learn and may result in poor academic performance, given that they cause youth to be distracted, to lack motivation, and to be indifferent to their situation. Other consequences of depression include substance abuse, sexual acting out, withdrawal, and self-destructive behaviors, such as self-mutilation and suicide.

Poor self-image. The erosion of self-esteem, often associated with depression, is found among large numbers of homeless adolescents. These youth often feel that they are powerless victims who are unable to effect change in their lives. They engage in negative acting-out behaviors that serve to reinforce their low self-image while bringing them much-needed attention. Increasing numbers of urban homeless youth engage in cross-dressing, which becomes yet another way to alienate themselves from the educational system.

Attachment difficulties. Homeless youth are raised in environments in which their physical and emotional needs are ignored. Previous experience with parental figures teaches them not to rely on adults for support, guidance, and protection. They are not likely to have experienced the healthy attachments with adults that help an individual to cope with stress, frustration, and fear and that provide the foundation upon which future relationships are built. Consequently, they are likely to have tremendous difficulties attaching to anyone and getting their needs met (Price, 1989). A history of abusive family interaction, combined with poor previous contact with adults in authority, leaves such youth highly distrustful of adults—including teachers and service providers (White, 1989). Those youth who pass in and out of the child welfare system learn to distrust adults, after experiencing betrayal by one too many seemingly caring adults who more often than not disappear from their lives (Raychaba, 1989). In a school setting, such young people may have difficulty learning in small group settings—indeed, even in one-on-one situations. These youth may test relationships until the most patient teacher is exhausted.

Feelings of futurelessness. Young people who have been raised in substance-abusing and violent families may have tremendous feelings of hopelessness. They have negative expectations of others and little hope that the future can be different. Having seen that little or nothing of their childhood hopes has materialized, these youth find it difficult to see beyond the present and have little faith in the future (Jaklitsch & Beyer, 1990; Price, 1989). Their

intense focus on the here and now may interfere with their motivation to attend school and to value education. The very nature of the school setting as a place of preparation for adulthood is in conflict with the feelings of futurelessness typically caused by the experience of homelessness.

Behavioral Problems

The physical and environmental realities of being homeless can contribute to behavioral problems. Physical illness, poor hygiene, and malnutrition can result in listlessness, withdrawn behavior, and physical conditions that are not conducive to learning. Such conditions can cause an adolescent to feel angry and to behave in extremely aggressive ways, leading to violent outbursts that may involve the use of weapons. When adolescents are in school, these behaviors frequently lead to rejection by teachers, difficulties with peers, and, ultimately, to suspension or expulsion. Anger may also be directed inward, leading the young person to engage in self-destructive behaviors such as self-mutilation and suicide. Several studies have reported high rates of suicidal behavior among unaccompanied homeless youth (Janus et al., 1987; Mundy et al., 1990; Robertson, 1989; Shaffer & Caton, 1984).

Program Recommendations for Educating Urban Homeless Adolescents

In spite of seemingly insurmountable barriers, there are effective ways to provide educational services to homeless adolescents. We have identified three critical program recommendations that should be considered in designing educational strategies for this population: (a) increase collaboration between schools and agencies serving homeless youth, (b) develop an individualized service approach that involves community outreach, and (c) encourage sensitivity to the issues of homelessness among school personnel. As we discuss the importance of these recommendations, we will illustrate how they have been implemented by a program that provides educational services to homeless youth in a major urban setting. SafeSpace, operated by the Center for Children and Families and located in the Times Square district of New York City, offers a comprehensive range of services to homeless youth, including food, showers, counseling, referral, health care, arts instruction, life-skills classes, and educational programming.[1]

Interagency Collaboration

SafeSpace is one of many community-based agencies that serve homeless youth. Other agencies include runaway and homeless youth programs, as well as independent living, substance abuse, and prostitution or street outreach programs. These programs typically hire young staff, who, appropriately trained, can relate easily to and effectively assist homeless youth. Well-established programs often have a reputation on the street as a safe, nonthreatening place where trustworthy staff provide support for young people. It is essential that schools develop working relationships and improve communication with agencies that provide services to troubled youth. Educational services will be enhanced if educators and service providers collaborate through interagency task forces or interdisciplinary teams on both a community and an individual case basis.

SafeSpace education staff collaborate with local school boards, arranging to obtain the school records of their clients as quickly as possible. They also meet with school officials to develop individualized and responsive educational plans that take into account the unique circumstances and needs of each young person whom they serve. In some cases, youth may return to public school; others

1. For more information about SafeSpace, contact John Wright, Director, The Center for Children and Families, Inc., 133 West 46 Street, New York City, NY, 212-354-7233.

participate in an on-site General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program or receive individualized instruction from tutors in reading, writing, and basic "survival math."

Individualized Outreach Approach

Given the fears, instability, and transience of urban homeless youth, successful education programs need to be highly accessible and flexible. Outreach plays a key role in making contact with these disaffected young people because few homeless youth will seek out needed educational services. Whether on the street or on the school campus, services need to be developed that enable program staff to establish relationships with homeless youth on a personal level. To engage and sustain youth attention, educational services should be highly individualized and rewarding. Ideally, young people should be involved in the educational planning and decision-making process because this may help them regain a sense of control of their lives and encourage them to want to go to school.

Currently, the SafeSpace educational program serves approximately 30 homeless youth per month, attempting to address the unique needs of its clients and responding to the issues that young people confront in their daily lives. Approximately 15 percent of its students are completely illiterate; few of the remaining clientele have progressed past the fifth grade. Program staff recognize that traditional teaching methods have proven ineffective with young people who desperately need to learn how to live independently and survive. Therefore, the program presents basic skills and a curriculum that emphasizes the unique survival issues of the students' living environments. For example, science is taught through lessons on HIV and substance abuse, math covers entrepreneurial concepts, and reading and history lessons focus on cultural issues related to the students' diverse ethnic backgrounds. The program also places a heavy emphasis on the arts. With the assistance of volunteers from the New York City arts community, the young people have opportunities to improve their self-esteem through dance, theater, and the visual arts.

Sensitivity to the Issues of Homelessness

School personnel must be aware of and understand the distinctive problems facing urban homeless youth. In communities that have a significant number of homeless youth, school personnel should receive training on the topic of homeless adolescents. Such training could be provided by community-based agencies that have experience working with homeless youth. Training models that encourage the coordination of services, such as bringing together service providers and educators to share their general expertise, can be particularly effective in the area of homelessness. A variety of topics should be covered in these training sessions, especially in those areas in which educators can exert significant influence on the young people with whom they work, such as substance abuse, AIDS prevention, pregnancy prevention, and abuse and neglect. It is essential that all school personnel receive training on identifying and treating suicidal behavior. Immediate action should be taken with young people who communicate suicidal thoughts or have a specific suicide plan. Overall, teachers can play a crucial role in providing a safe and secure learning environment for youth and encouraging them to stay in school. By educating their colleagues about the issues of homelessness, informed teachers may perhaps minimize the ostracism and pressures experienced by homeless students.

Conclusion

Although education offers street youth the opportunity to break out of the cycle of chronic poverty and homelessness, most are unlikely to succeed in traditional academic programs. Rather, they need an individualized, personal approach that deals with issues relevant to their life circumstances. They also need comprehensive services to provide for their basic needs (for example, housing, food, medical and mental health care, and substance abuse services) that both prepare them for independent living and enable them to learn. If the short-term costs of reaching and serving homeless adolescents seem high, the long-term human and societal costs of failing to reach these youth are even higher. It is the obligation and challenge of educators to de-

velop an effective response that prevents the homeless youth of today from becoming the chronically homeless, disenfranchised adults of tomorrow.

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Meeting the Educational Needs of Homeless Children

Rafferty, Yvonne (1998). "Meeting the Educational Needs of Homeless Children." *Educational Leadership*, 55 (4), 48-52. Reprinted with permission.

The "economic boom" of the 1980s paradoxically generated an unprecedented rise in the number of homeless families with children in the United States that continues to this day. Major disruptions to the home environment inevitably take their toll on normal family life, including the education of children. Even when the change is a planned move from one permanent home to another, and children are prepared for the disruption, the transition is stressful. For homeless children, the loss of their home is more sudden, more unexpected, and more traumatic—the family is suddenly thrust outside of its own community, friends, support system, and schools. The experience is devastating for children and their families (Rafferty and Shinn, 1991).

Educators can play a critical role in cushioning the blow for homeless children. They need to understand how homelessness affects a child's ability to succeed in school, what the legal rights of homeless children and their families are regarding education, and what schools can do to mitigate the potentially harmful effects of homelessness on children.

Homelessness and Academic Failure

Homeless children score lower than their housed peers on achievement tests and are less likely to be promoted at the end of the school year. Their failure to succeed will, no doubt, have long-term repercussions, as indicated by the research on academic failure, school mobility, and grade retention. No study has looked at dropout rates for homeless children. Related research on housed children indicates the risk (Rafferty, 1995).

Several factors severely compromise the ability of homeless children to succeed in school, as I discovered in interviews with 277 homeless families in New York City in 1988. Barriers to the success of these children include health problems, hunger, transportation obstacles, and difficulty obtaining school clothes and supplies—all of which are linked to low attendance rates (Rafferty and Rollins, 1989). Other factors are associated with the nature of the emergency shelter system, the mobility that follows the loss of the home, and barriers that inhibit access to schools and to various school services.

Sadly, there is no right to shelter in the United States. Even when families successfully obtain emergency shelter, other obstacles prevail. Placements are often made without regard to community ties or educational continuity. For example, the 1989 study by Rafferty and Rollins showed that 71 percent of homeless families with school-age children were sheltered in areas far removed from their original homes. Many had been frequently bounced between facilities. In many cases, each transfer to a different shelter requires a transfer to a new school, and each transfer means the loss of valuable school days. In addition, the noisy environment and constant flow of traffic typical of many shelters make it difficult for children to do their homework or get enough sleep.

When both home and school disappear simultaneously, children are especially unanchored. They lose their friends and must make new ones; they have to get used to a new school, new teachers, and new schoolwork that is often discontinuous with what they were doing previously. Homeless children also confront stigmatization, insensitivity,

and rejection by classmates and teachers, as a 12-year-old homeless child states:

> People in school call me a hotel kid.... They have no right to punish me for something I have no control over. I'm just a little boy, living in a hotel, petrified, wanting to know what's going to happen to me. I am not a hotel kid. I am a child who lives in a hotel. (Roberts, 1990)

Besides the emotional and educational impact on children, frequent student mobility makes it more difficult for schools to provide meaningful services, particularly if records have been lost in the shuffle. Homeless children historically have faced many barriers accessing education, although legislation has improved the situation somewhat. Residency requirements have been the most significant barrier because homeless students are, by definition, without a residence. When parents have attempted to enroll children in the school district where they are temporarily staying, admission often has been denied because they are not residents of the district. In some cases, restrictive shelter policies toward adolescent males force parents to send their adolescent children to stay with relatives or friends. Some schools deny or delay the enrollment of children who do not reside with a parent or legal guardian in the school district. Most schools continue to deny homeless preschoolers (including those with disabilities) their legal rights to schooling. Many are forced to transfer into local schools because the districts simply disregard the federal mandates pertaining to transportation. Other delays occur because of a lack of documentation, including birth certificates, academic records, and immunization records. For some children, the challenge becomes too great. As one homeless teenager explains:

> Between all the school changing, my credits were messed up, and they said I might have to stay back another year. I didn't know what was going on. I dropped out and started working full-time. (Berck, 1992, p. 82)

Like housed children, some homeless children have educational needs that require special services, such as special education, bilingual programs, remedial education, and gifted programs. When homeless children transfer into new schools, they often experience difficulties accessing the services they received previously. This occurs for a variety of reasons, including lost records and the new school's failure to comply with the law.

Educational Rights of Homeless Children

The 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and subsequent amendments in 1990 and 1994 provide considerable protection for the educational needs of homeless children and youth in the United States. The legislation also provided formula grants for states to carry out the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (Subtitle VII-B). The following are key provisions of the law:

- The law requires states to ensure that local educational agencies do not create a separate education system for homeless children. Subtitle VII-B mandates that "homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment."

- States must adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not isolated or stigmatized.

- States must ensure that every homeless child "has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool education, as provided to other children and youth."

- States must review and revise all policies, practices, laws, and regulations that may prevent the enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless students. This includes providing a choice of school placement, with the right to continue in the "school of origin" through the end of the current school year or for the following year if the child becomes homeless between academic years. ("School of origin" is defined as the school the child had been attending when permanently housed, or the school in which the child was last enrolled, regardless of where the family is temporarily staying.) Local school

districts must comply with a parent's or guardian's request for school selection and provide the required transportation.

- States must ensure that homeless students receive access to the same educational programs and services in the classroom as their permanently housed peers, as well as the same access to preschool programs, early intervention, tutoring, counseling, before- and after-school programs, vocational programs, and state and local food programs.

Although the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program has helped to reduce barriers to education—particularly those related to residency requirements and the transfer of school records—serious implementation problems persist. Less progress has been made, for example, with regard to the provision of transportation to schools of origin, accessing comparable services to special education and before- and after-school programs, and involving parents in school placement decisions as required by law (Anderson et al., 1995; National Law Center, 1995).

Persistent problems also hinder enforcement of the requirement to ensure that all homeless children obtain equal access to education. For example, many states routinely disregard certain elements in the McKinney Act's definition of "homeless" and deny the mandated protections to children who are temporarily living with relatives or in domestic violence shelters. Anderson and colleagues (1995) report:

> Although most states have reviewed and revised laws that create barriers to school enrollment for homeless children and youth, this does not guarantee that homeless children and youth have access to school.... Translating state policy into local policy is a never-ending process fraught with difficulty (pp. 12-13).

What Educators Can Do

According to state education agencies, the most frequently reported educational needs of homeless children are as follows:

- Remediation/tutoring
- School materials and clothes
- Support services such as counselors
- After-school/extended day/summer programs to provide basic needs for food and shelter and recreation
- Transportation
- Educational program continuity and stability
- Sensitivity and awareness training for school personnel and students

Both directly and indirectly, principals and teachers can take steps to meet these needs and mitigate the potentially harmful effects of homelessness on their students (NASCEHCY, 1997; Walther-Thomas et al., 1996; Wiley and Ballard, 1993). Here are some specific suggestions:

1. ***Facilitate continuity of schooling.*** School may be the only source of stability in the life of a homeless child. One effective preventive strategy is to help homeless children remain enrolled in their current schools. Local educational agencies should ensure that school personnel are aware of the legal rights of homeless children, and schools should actively collaborate with local shelters to provide continuity.

2. ***Minimize enrollment delays.*** Schools must address access barriers and implement school policies that minimize enrollment delays, particularly those related to residency, guardianship, and immunization requirements, as well as the timely transfer of school records. Educators must expedite the process both for students who are transferring into their school and for those who are leaving.

3. ***Ensure timely access to appropriate educational services and in-school support services.*** Schools must ensure that homeless children are placed in appropriate classroom set-

tings and that they receive the services they are entitled to. If a child needs special educational services, schools should not postpone referrals or testing because of uncertainty about how long the child will be enrolled. In addition, schools and districts should ensure that homeless children receive support services that are comparable to those provided to other children (such as free and reduced-price lunch programs, before- and after-school programs, and summer programs).

4. ***Provide family support services.*** Homeless children and their families have a variety of urgent needs requiring services that schools are in an ideal position to make available. For example, McKinney grants provide fiscal support for counseling for homeless children and youth and for parent education and training programs. In addition, schools can enlist community volunteers to tutor students.

5. ***Empower teachers as advocates.*** Teachers can be a powerful force in the lives of homeless children, helping them both emotionally and academically. Teachers can make sure that children are placed in the appropriate grade and are receiving necessary educational and support services. They can identify a child's special needs and ensure that the child receives proper testing to diagnose those needs. They can also refer the child to the school psychologist or guidance counselor or to outside counseling. They can help children make new friends and learn how to deal with questions from classmates about being homeless. Teachers can ensure that homeless children are never isolated or stigmatized.

6. ***Provide staff development.*** Staff development workshops can increase the sensitivity of those who teach homeless children, enabling teachers to understand the nature of homelessness, to create positive experiences fo
r homeless children, and to provide strategies for discussing this topic in the classroom.

7. ***Encourage family involvement.*** Educators should provide a warm and nonjudgmental reception for homeless parents and address their questions and concerns. Workshops conducted at shelters can be especially valuable, covering such topics as the educational rights of homeless children, special education, child development, and how to communicate with teachers.

8. ***Appoint a homeless liaison in each school district.*** Where they exist, homeless liaisons play a key role in linking local education agencies to community resources, including shelters, food and clothing banks, community mental health services, after-school programs, and childcare providers. Through these linkages, homeless children and their families are connected to services that they need.

The Larger Issue

More than anything else, homeless children need homes. As long as there is an insufficient supply of affordable permanent housing in the United States, and as long as the gap between rich and poor widens, homeless children will suffer the consequences. Advocates have been tremendously successful in securing emergency legislation designed to minimize educational disruption when families lose their homes. But until our policymakers recognize that it is cruel and abusive to expose our nation's most vulnerable children to the hardships of homelessness, schools can help by providing an environment that supports these children's physical, emotional, and social development. Educators can and must play a vital role.

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Legal Issues in Educating Homeless Children: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges

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Introduction

Stability is important for the healthy physical and emotional development of children (Erickson, 1950). A move, regardless of the reason, disrupts one's daily routines and requires substantial adjustments. Disruptions to the home environment inevitably take their toll on the education of children, health care, and any semblance of normal family life. Research on children who move from one permanent home to another indicates that even when the move is planned, and children are prepared for the disruption, the transition is stressful (Humke & Schaefer, 1995). For children who become homeless, the loss of their home has generally been more traumatic—the family is suddenly thrust outside of its own community. Thus, homelessness not only involves the loss of one's home, but also the concomitant loss of friends, belongings, support systems, and schools. It is a major life event with devastating consequences for children (Holden, Horton, & Danseco, 1995; Masten, Miliotis, Graham-Berman, Ramirez, & Neeman, 1993; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991).

The Threat to School Success: Legal Implications

The threat to school success as a result of homelessness was recognized by the U.S. Congress 11 years ago when they passed the first comprehensive legislation to aid the homeless. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (1997) authorized a wide range of programs and benefits to provide urgently needed aid to the nation's homeless and poor (U.S. General Accounting Office [GAO], 1992, 1994a). Title VII-Subtitle B, The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program provided considerable protection for the educational needs of homeless children and youth (Rafferty, 1995, 1997).

The McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990 substantially amended the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. Federal directives to states were significantly expanded to ensure that school districts appropriately respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth (National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth [NASCEHCY], 1991). The program was also amended in 1994 as part of the reauthorization of the Improving America's Schools Act (1994). The revised Act further strengthened requirements to remove barriers and ensure access to education for homeless children (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1995; U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 1995a). The following section provides an overview of the major components of the Subtitle VII-B Program, critiques the extent to which it addresses the educational needs of homeless children and youth, and provides recommendations in terms of both policy and practice for addressing unmet needs. It particularly focuses on children who are homeless because their families have lost their permanent homes. Homeless emancipated minors are discussed elsewhere (McKay & Hughes, 1994).

1. ***It designated the population protected by the Act by providing specific definitions of both "child" and "homeless" and mandated states to gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the state.*** The McKinney Act (1987) is quite specific with regard to the population protected by the Act. Section 100(1)(1)(2) provides a general definition of (a) child and youth and (b) homeless individual. The terms *child* or *youth* include "those persons who, if they were children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education." The terms *homeless* or *homeless individual* include

   (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is (A) a subsidized publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); (B) an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (C) a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. (Section 100[1][1][2])

Until 1994, states were required to gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the state—including the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in schools in the state—and submit a report to the Secretary of Education every two years. In reauthorizing the McKinney Act in 1994, Congress eliminated the requirement that states report on the numbers of homeless children and youth and instead required them to provide estimates.

Although the definitions above specify the population of children and youth protected by the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the accuracy of state counts have been notoriously inaccurate (Anderson, Janger, & Panton, 1995). Many states use much more restrictive definitions of both *homeless* and *school-age*. Some state education agencies (SEAs) include only those children who are temporarily staying in publicly or privately operated emergency shelters. Some SEAs include only those children who have reached compulsory school-age, excluding all others who may be eligible for preschool or kindergarten services (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1997; Rafferty, 1995). Indeed, the U.S. DOE (1995a) issued the following caution in their report to Congress: "The problems associated with duplication, extrapolation, and differing state definitions of homeless continue. We advise, therefore, that the data contained in this report be viewed cautiously as estimates rather than precise numbers" (p. 1).

2. ***It mandated the adoption of policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not isolated or stigmatized.*** One of the most important provisions of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program is the requirement for SEAs to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) do not create a separate education system for homeless children: "Homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment" (Sec. 721[3]). SEAs and LEAs must "adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not isolated or stigmatized." (Sec. 722[g][1][H])

It is clear from this mandate that any policies or practices that segregate homeless children from their housed peers are illegal. Nonetheless, some homeless children throughout the United States are required to attend a school at or near the emergency shelter facility where they are temporarily staying. In some cases, children with disabilities who were receiving special education services prior to becoming homeless are also placed in these separate schools, without receiving the services to which they are legally entitled. The existence of separate schools for homeless children not only violates the McKinney Act, but the practice of systematic denial of services to children with disabilities also violates the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1990, 1995, 1997).

3. ***It mandated equal access to public schools and a choice of school placement.*** The

McKinney Act mandated that homeless children have the same access to education as their permanently housed peers. Children may remain in their current school or transfer into the school serving the attendance area in which they are currently staying. LEAs "shall comply to the extent feasible with the request made by the parent or guardian regarding school selection" (Sec. 722[g][3][B]).

Several studies indicate that homeless children are routinely transferred into local schools and that parents are rarely, if ever, involved in the determination of school selection. For example, 50 percent of the shelter providers surveyed by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1995) reported that parents are not being informed about the educational rights of their children and that school officials generally make the decisions. Anderson and colleagues (1995) conducted a national evaluation of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (under contract to the U.S. DOE) and concluded that

> Although the McKinney Act states that the best interest of the child must be considered in making school placement decisions, site-visit data suggest that determining what is in the best interest of the child rarely results in returning homeless children and youth to their school of origin. (p.15)

4. ***It mandated equal access to educational services and programs.*** Once access to school is obtained, homeless students need proper educational placement, appropriate support services, and promotion of their social and emotional well-being (Stronge, 1993). According to SEAs nationwide, the most frequently reported educational needs of homeless children include (a) remediation/tutoring, (b) support services such as counselors, and (c) after-school/extended day/summer programs to provide basic needs for food, shelter, and recreation (U.S. DOE, 1995b). In addition, as with their housed peers, some homeless children have educational needs that require special services. These include children with disabilities (including preschoolers) who require special education services, students not proficient in English who require bilingual services, students with academic problems who require remedial services, and gifted students who are eligible for special programs. (Rafferty, 1995)

The McKinney Act also mandated SEAs to ensure that homeless children (including preschoolers) have the same access as their housed peers to special education and all other educational programs and services for which they are eligible. Additional protections are afforded children with disabilities who are between the ages of 0 and 21, under the IDEA (1990, 1995, 1997). Finally, all homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for services under Title 1, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1994), whether they live in a Title 1 school attendance area or meet the academic standards required of other children for eligibility. Homeless children may receive Title 1 educational or support services in schools and shelters or other facilities outside of school (U.S. DOE, 1995a).

SEAs must also ensure that homeless children are not excluded from other community programs and that homeless children who meet the relevant eligibility criteria for such programs are "able to participate in federal, state, or local food programs...have equal access to the same public preschool programs, administered by the state agency, as provided to other children...before- and after-school care programs" (Sec. 722[g][1][C] and [D]).

Several studies have assessed the extent to which homeless children receive equal access to school programs, educational services, and community-based programs. This research suggests that homeless children seldom receive the same educational services that are available to their permanently housed peers. Rafferty and Rollins (1989), for example, found that only 54 percent of the 97 homeless children in New York City who were receiving special services (for example, bilingual, remedial, disability-related services) prior to the loss of their homes continued to receive them while homeless. Rafferty (1991) found that homeless children were frequently excluded from participation in after-

school programs and other extended-day programs in the community, primarily because they were filled to capacity at the beginning of the school year. A more recent study reports that 45 percent of 169 homeless children in California were found to be "eligible for special education evaluation," but only 23 percent had been evaluated (Zima, Bussing, Forness, & Benjamin, 1997). Students who have been referred for special education are often forced to transfer to a different school before the evaluation process is completed (Johnson, 1992; Korinek, Walther-Thomas, & Laycock, 1992).

Several national studies also suggest that homeless children do not always receive equal access to school programs and services. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990) reports that 11 of the 20 states in their survey indicated that homeless children are denied access to comparable services–including school meals and special education programs. A more recent national study found that access to school meals was no longer an issue, but that equal access to programs and services remains problematic. According to the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1995), shelter providers considered the following issues to be most problematic for homeless children: evaluation for special education services (56 percent), participation in after-school events and extracurricular activities (58 percent), and accessing before- and after-school programs (55 percent). Finally, the national evaluation conducted by Anderson et al. (1995) found that a large proportion of homeless children still experience difficulty gaining access to needed educational services such as special education, Title 1 remedial programs, and Head Start.

As mentioned earlier, SEAs are required to ensure that homeless children "have equal access to the same public preschool programs, administered by the state agency, as provided to other children" (Sec. 722[g][1][D]). Although homeless preschoolers have always been protected by the McKinney Act, it was not until the 1994 Amendments that Congress amended this section of the Act to make it explicit that homeless preschoolers must receive the same access to publicly funded preschool programs as their peers. In 1991, Advocates for Children of New York surveyed 22 district coordinators for the education of homeless children in New York City and found that efforts were rarely made to place preschoolers and kindergarten eligible children into available programs (Rafferty, 1991). More recently, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1997) surveyed State Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth, early childhood administrators, and family shelter providers from across the country (N = 93). They found that homeless preschoolers are rarely given the opportunity to participate in preschool programs. They also identified major barriers to their participation: the lack of availability of preschool programs, transience of homeless families, parents' lack of understanding of their children's educational rights, lack of coordination of services, lack of records, and residency requirements.

Rafferty (1991, 1995) also reported that the educational needs of preschoolers with disabilities go unmet–despite the protections afforded them under both the McKinney Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For example, only two of the 22 district coordinators for the education of homeless children in New York City indicated that they had a policy or procedure to ensure that homeless preschoolers suspected of being disabled received evaluation and program services. Rafferty (1991) also reported that finding appropriate placements in a timely manner is particularly problematic for children with disabilities and that transportation was an additional barrier once a placement had been arranged. Because of these barriers, children were often kept out of school until appropriate placements and transportation were arranged.

5. ***It mandated the removal of barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school.*** Before the passage of the McKinney Act in 1987, homeless children faced numerous obstacles accessing public school education (Rafferty, 1995; Stronge & Helm, 1991). Residency requirements were the most significant barrier because homeless students are, by definition, without a residence. When parents attempted to enroll their children in the school

district where they were temporarily staying, admission was frequently denied because they were not residents of the district. Even when children were allowed to register, many experienced substantial delays associated with a lack of records (e.g., birth certificates, academic records, and immunization records). Children who were not transferring into local schools also confronted barriers posed by residency requirements: some schools argued they were no longer eligible to attend the same school because they no longer lived in the school district. In many cases, however, continued attendance at their current school was made impossible because of transportation barriers. School access barriers also confronted homeless children who were not currently staying with their family at the temporary location because of either discriminatory shelter policies against males (particularly those over the age of 12) or their temporary placement with relatives or friends. Some schools routinely denied or delayed the enrollment of children who did not reside with a parent or legal guardian in the school district.

When the McKinney Act was passed in 1987, states were required to address problems caused by barriers posed by state policies on residency (lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation) and transportation issues. Records were defined as "any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs" (Sec. 722[e][5]). The 1990 Amendments substantially strengthened this aspect of the Act by expressing an intolerance for all barriers. It also moved beyond requiring states to "address" barriers. It explicitly required them to take action.

> In any state that has a compulsory residency requirement as a component of the state's compulsory school attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and homeless youth, the state will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. (Sec. 721[2])

Significant progress has been made by states in removing residency requirements as a barrier to education. Many states, for example, have undertaken legislation and regulatory reform to remove residency obstacles to enrollment of homeless children and youth. Substantial progress has also been made with regard to guardianship requirements and immunization requirements, although they remain persistent barriers in some states. Less progress has been made to address the barriers to education caused by transportation (Anderson et al., 1995; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1995).

There are other barriers, however, that are rarely, if ever, discussed. For more than a decade now, the U.S. DOE has been required to present Congress with a list of the major reasons why homeless children do not attend school. In addition to the school-related barriers discussed above, this list also includes several family-related factors such as (a) parents preoccupied with finding food, shelter, and employment; (b) concern that abusive parents will locate and harm children; (c) parents' concern that children will be taken away by school or service providers; and (d) families in crisis lack the motivation to send children to school. These lists also include two key factors associated with shelter policies in the United States: (a) shelter stays are too short to make enrollment worthwhile, and (b) children are discouraged by frequent school changes and the condition of homelessness. Sadly, these well-known barriers to education are rarely, if ever, discussed.

6. ***It mandated the provision of direct services to promote enrollment, attendance, and success in school.*** The 1990 amendments to the McKinney Act moved beyond access barriers and recognized the need for services once children are enrolled in school. The amendments increased appropriations significantly from the 1987 levels and explicitly mandated SEAs to provide grants to LEAs for the purpose of "facilitating the enrollment, attendance, and suc-

cess in school of homeless children and youth" (Sec. 723[a][1]). Schools may use the funds to provide before- and after-school programs, tutoring programs, referrals for medical and mental health services, preschool programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, transportation, and other services that may not otherwise be provided by public schools. LEAs that received assistance must also coordinate with other agencies and designate a liaison to ensure that homeless children "receive educational services for which such families, children, and youth are eligible." (Sec. 722 [7][A])

For more than a decade now, SEAs nationwide have identified remediation and tutoring in basic skills as one of the most vital educational needs of homeless children and youth. Little research is available on the extent to which LEAs provide direct services. Several sources, however, indicate that local programs have made tremendous strides toward helping homeless children succeed in school (Anderson et al., 1995; NASCEHCY, 1997; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1995). Resources have also been made available that provide examples of activities that have been developed to address the educational needs of the homeless. As a result of the decrease in funding for Fiscal Year 1997, however, many states were forced to withdraw services from homeless children. For example, 63 percent of the state coordinators surveyed by the National Coalition for the Homeless (1997) reported reducing services such as tutoring, transportation, and the purchase of school supplies.

7. ***It imposed comprehensive requirements for states that participate in the program and mandated coordination by state education agencies.*** The McKinney Act mandated SEAs to establish an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. State coordinators are required to (a) estimate the number of homeless children and youth in the state; (b) document the problems they experience gaining access to schools/preschools, progress made in addressing access barriers, and the success of the state's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program in facilitating school enrollment, attendance, and success; and (c) report their findings to the U.S. DOE (Sec. 722[f][2]). They are required to develop and implement a state plan that explains how the SEA will provide for the education of homeless children and youth.

Early studies that examined compliance with the Act indicated that state plans routinely omitted provisions mandated by the Act (cf. Rafferty, 1995). More recently, Anderson and colleagues (1995) examined the state plans and progress reports of 55 states and territories submitted to the U.S. DOE between 1988 and 1992. They focused on five areas emphasized in the McKinney Act: access to school, access to educational programs and services, awareness-raising activities, coordination and collaboration, and support to local school districts. They concluded the following:

> We found state plans and progress reports to be vague about the actual level of implementation, support, and resources channeled into activities for the education of homeless children and youth. In many cases, individual states did not include any detailed information on their activities in one or more of these five areas of interest, or references to activities in these areas were ambiguous. (p. 5)

They also reported key inconsistencies.

> In some of their early reports, several states described specific programs that were being considered for future implementation. Later progress reports, however, made no reference to the proposed programs, so it was unclear whether the proposed programs had actually been implemented. (p. 5)

The requirement for individual state plans was dropped following the reauthorization of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program in 1994. The Secretary of Education determined that the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program may be included in a consolidated plan, whereby a state may obtain funds under many federal programs through a single plan, rather than

through separate program plans or applications. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1995) reviewed the 1995 state plans submitted to the U.S. DOE to assess whether they addressed the specific educational needs of homeless children and youth, as required by the McKinney Act. Overall, 41 states chose to include the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program in a consolidated state plan, and nine states submitted individual plans. Of the 41 consolidated plans, few addressed any of the key requirements for state planning under the McKinney Act. The nine states that submitted individual plans, in contrast, adequately addressed the educational needs of homeless children.

The McKinney Act mandated SEAs to facilitate collaboration between the SEA, the state social services agency, and other relevant programs and service providers (including programs for preschoolers and runaway and homeless youth) to improve the provision of comprehensive services (sec. 722[f][5] and [6]). They must also work to improve the provision of comprehensive services to these children and youth and their families through the development of relationships and coordination with other education, child development and preschool programs, and services providers. Comprehensive services include health care, nutrition, and other social services. The McKinney Act also mandates coordination with emergency shelter/housing providers. Little research has assessed the adequacy of collaboration between state coordinators and other service providers. There is no documentation of efforts between state coordinators and local housing agencies.

8. ***It mandated oversight by the U.S. Department of Education.*** The U.S. DOE is authorized to make grants available to SEAs for implementing the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. They are also required to oversee the implementation of the program. This includes (a) reviewing applications, state plans, and allocating funds; (b) monitoring and reviewing compliance by states; (c) reporting to Congress at the end of each fiscal year; (d) disseminating information on exemplary programs; (e) determining the best means of identifying, locating, and counting children and youth; and (f) providing support and technical assistance to local education agencies. (Sec. 724[b])

There were substantial delays in implementing the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. It took a lawsuit in federal court, filed by advocates for homeless children, to get the U.S. DOE to expedite implementation (Rafferty, 1995). The U.S. DOE has also been criticized for its leadership in reviewing and approving state plans and ensuring that SEAs remove the barriers to education. The U.S. DOE has also been lax in submitting their reports to Congress in a timely manner and their failure to include all of the required information. For example, attendance rates are meaningless because of inconsistencies in how states define "homeless," whether preschoolers are counted as required, and the persistent inability of some SEAs to calculate attendance rates for children who are homeless, as required by federal law 11 years ago (Rafferty, 1995). Finally, the U.S. DOE has been negligent in monitoring compliance and ensuring that SEAs remove the barriers to education that are still in existence in some school districts (GAO, 1990; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1995; Rafferty, 1995).

Discussion

Congress took a major step to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth in 1987, and later in 1990 and 1994, by expressing an intolerance for any barriers that impede their academic success. Despite noteworthy progress in recent years in removing some major barriers to education for homeless children and youth, obstacles continue to prevent them from achieving regular school attendance and academic success. As noted by the National Coalition for the Homeless (1997), strong national leadership is needed on the issue of homelessness. A White House commission should be appointed to examine policies that produce homelessness and develop a strategic plan to ensure adequate housing, income, health, schooling, and social services. At the very least, the mandates set forth in the McKinney Act need to be enforced if continuity of educational services is to be achieved.

- All school-age children who meet the McKinney Act's definitions should receive the legal protections to which they are entitled. States should adopt the federal definitions of homeless children and youth. The U.S. DOE should ensure that SEAs comply with federal mandates. SEAs should ensure that LEAs carry out their responsibilities. Technical assistance and information should be routinely provided.

- All homeless children should receive the same access to public education as their housed peers. All separate schools for homeless children must be closed. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Office of Civil Rights should ensure termination of this discriminatory practice.

- Homeless children should not have to experience additional instability in their lives by forcing them to shift from school to school during the academic year. Instead, the goal should be for them to remain in their own schools, with familiar teachers, curriculum, and peers. Emergency shelter placements should be made in light of community ties. School-age children should be placed near their current schools or close to school bus routes or public transportation services.

- Shelter providers and other school staff who come into contact with homeless children and their families must be made aware of the choice regarding school placement. Parents must be informed of the educational rights of their children and be involved in the decision of whether their children should continue attending their current schools or transfer to new schools.

- Persistent barriers to timely and appropriate school placements must be removed. For children who continue to attend their current schools, transportation problems need to be expeditiously resolved, attendance needs to be monitored, and follow-up services provided if attendance is not satisfactory. For children who transfer to local schools, placement in appropriate educational settings must be made with a minimum of delay, and every effort should be made to ensure that they receive services that are comparable to their permanently housed peers. There must be efficient procedures for transferring student records. Special attention must be paid to bilingual students and students who need special education services. Special policies must be implemented to ensure that children with disabilities, including preschoolers, receive the educational services to which they are entitled to receive under the IDEA.

- Federal, state, and local education, housing, and health agencies must increase collaboration to enhance homeless children's access to needed services.

Conclusion

Children in the United States do not have a legal right to housing, to emergency shelter if they lose their home, to adequate nourishment and freedom from hunger, to preventive or curative health and mental health care, or to a high-quality public education that ensures their scholastic success. Without such rights, the consequences are devastating. No aspect of the tragedy of social injustice, however, is worse than its effect on homeless children. A decade ago, Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (1987). The McKinney Act was intended only as a first, emergency response to a national crisis. It was to be followed by longer-term comprehensive responses to prevent and end homelessness. Ten years later, it remains the only response. Consequently, there has been little or no progress made in preventing homelessness. It is clear, however, that we cannot solve the problem of homelessness through McKinney Act programs alone (GAO, 1994b). Continued expansion of the shelter system, in isolation from other critical resources, will not end homelessness even as it brings relief to the urgent needs of those who are homeless (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998). Providing McKinney funding to meet the needs of homeless families with children is vital but does nothing to prevent other families from becoming homeless. Real solutions require affordable housing, job training and placement, and health care, including mental health care and substance abuse treatment for those who need it. Policies must be developed to meet the

needs of families as a whole and, at the same time, the children within them. In view of the continuing crisis in the nation's housing system, and the great suffering that vulnerable children who lack permanent housing continue to endure each night, there is an urgent need for action. Given adequate resources, homelessness can be solved.

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Helping Homeless Students Build Resilience: What the School Community Can Do

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Although homeless students face many risks to healthy development and educational success, school communities can foster students' resilience or their ability to bounce back in spite of difficult circumstances. Resilience can be fostered by reducing risks and the impact of stressors, while activating protective processes that increase the support, structure, and opportunities needed for positive adaptation. These protective processes can be strengthened at the student, family, school, and community levels. Each member of the school community (including administrators, support and classroom staff, students, and families) plays an important role in supporting students who are homeless. In this article, specific roles and strategies for promoting homeless students' resilience within the school community are highlighted.

"I don't like living in the shelter very much even though the people who work here are very good people and all. But it's embarrassing to live here. I didn't tell any of my old friends where I was going when I moved; and my new friends at my new school, I can't invite them over or have them call me on the phone because then they would know I am living in a shelter. I used to have my own room, but now it's hard to do my homework, and there are always strange people around. Don't tell my mom this, okay? I always tell her I'm fine. She worries a lot and cries." (Monica, age 14)[1]

Introduction

Monica's story is far more prevalent than many educators realize. Many young children and adolescents struggle to maintain a "normal" life—with peer connections, learning opportunities, and family support—in shelters or cars or relatives' back rooms. Sometimes they become protectors, rather than the protected. These emotional and physical struggles challenge students' school participation and success. "No population of students is more at-risk of school failure, if not outright school exclusion, than the homeless" (Stronge, 1992, p. 19). Unfortunately, schools are not always prepared to reach out to these students and their families. Lack of knowledge about homeless students, their educational rights and needs, can act to block students' access to schooling. Although school communities have rich resources for promoting educational success, educators need to develop their own roles in promoting the inclusion of homeless students in the school community.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education estimated that approximately 750,000 school-aged children and youth are homeless (1995). This figure does not include the increasing number of infants and preschoolers who are homeless and unserved by early intervention programs (Nunez, 1996). Numerous risks are associated with the instability of homelessness, including poverty, adolescent parenting, substance abuse, family violence, child abuse, inadequate job preparation, and illiteracy (Stronge, 1997). These stressors have serious con-

1. Reprinted with permission (Waddell, 1996).

sequences for developing children and youth because "every year spent in poverty reduces by two percentage points a child's chances of finishing school by age 19" (Children's Defense Fund, 1995, p. 92). Because level of school attainment is the best predictor of subsequent employment and economic stability (Entwisle, 1993), fostering successful school participation is fundamental to improving adult outcomes for homeless children and youth. Members of school communities, including staff, students, and families, can play important roles in the lives of students facing the extreme stress of homelessness. For example, when children in high-risk circumstances participate in relationships with caring adults and peers, stress is buffered, and positive adaptation or resilience is promoted (Masten, 1994). *Resilience* has been defined as the ability to bounce back, in spite of stressful experiences. Studies of resilient children and youth highlight the individual, family, school, and community factors that are associated with healthy development and positive outcomes in adulthood (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). Recent applications of resilience constructs to educational and community programs (Hanson & Carta, 1996; Oxley, 1994; Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994) have provided a conceptual framework for planning supportive school programs for homeless students. The purpose of this article is to

1. Review research on risk and resilience
2. Describe how resilience may be fostered within school communities
3. Identify specific roles for school community members in promoting the resilience and educational success of homeless children and youth

What Is Resilience?

Resilience has been defined as a dynamic process of adaptation, "a function of the individual's unique strengths, capacities, vulnerabilities, and 'goodness of fit' with the demands and opportunities of the environment" (Felsman, 1989, p. 79). Recently, researchers have begun to shift their focus away from studying the negative outcomes of stressful circumstances to studying the positive adaptation and resilience of individuals in spite of high-risk experiences (Masten et al., 1991; Morrison & Cosden, 1997; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). In a review of the major studies of resilience, Masten et al. (1991) identified three concepts of resilience: (a) resilience as overcoming the odds, (b) resilience as stress-resistance, and (c) resilience as recovery from trauma.

Overcoming the Odds

In their longitudinal studies of all the pregnancies and births within the community of Kauai in a single year, Werner and Smith (1982, 1992) traced the developmental pathways of approximately 500 men and women across 32 years of life. "These individuals experienced moderate to severe degrees of perinatal stress, grew up in chronic poverty, were reared by parents with little formal education, and/or lived in disorganized family environments" (Werner & Smith, 1992, p. 2). Of the 201 identified as high risk due to four or more perinatal, economic, and/or familial stressors, 72 developed into well-adjusted adults. Thus, one third developed into "competent, confident, and caring young adult[s] by age 18" (Werner & Smith, 1992, p. 2).

These resilient men and women had several significant features in common that promoted their successful adaptation, including specific individual qualities, particular caregiver/mentor characteristics, and well-timed opportunities (Werner & Smith, 1992). Individual characteristics that were demonstrated by these resilient individuals included problem-solving abilities, sociability, age-appropriate independence, goal orientation, positive self-concept, and special interests. Caregivers who promoted the development of resilience were warm and supportive, provided structure and high expectations, and advocated for increased opportunities for the child's development. Schools and community organizations in which these resilient individuals were involved encouraged independence, talent and values development, positive peer relationships, and interactions with strong mentors.

Other studies of resilience have been conducted in the context of historical events, such as the Great Depression and the farm crisis (Elder, 1998), in dif-

ferent types of communities (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Long & Valliant, 1984), and in different types of caregiving environments (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Morgan, 1987; Garmezy & Masten, 1991; Rutter, 1987). Longitudinal studies conducted by Elder (1998) and colleagues, for example, documented the impact of economic downturns on family functioning and child development. Fathers' irritability and parental harshness appeared to be exacerbated or buffered by child and maternal characteristics. Baldwin et al. (1990) compared the caregiving environments of high-achieving students in both middle-class and inner-city environments. Parents across both environments demonstrated common characteristics, including warmth and high expectations.

In their study of adolescent mothers and their children, Furstenberg et al. (1987) documented the positive outcomes associated with parental educational attainment and smaller family size. The children of teenage mothers who were characterized as adaptable demonstrated positive educational and behavioral outcomes when they themselves reached adolescence. Studies of children with schizophrenic parents have documented both poor outcomes and positive adaptation. Significant risk factors for these children include inconsistent physical and emotional care, as well as frequent parent-child separation (for example, during parental hospitalization). Nevertheless, good mental health outcomes (as judged by parents, psychologists, and teachers) were observed in children when specific child and environmental protective factors were present (Masten, 1994).

Stress Resistance and Recovery from Trauma

Resilience also has been conceptualized as stress resistance or the ability to recover from trauma. Research on resilience as stress resistance has focused on risk factors such as exposure to divorce and violence—risk factors that also relate to homelessness. For example, Heatherington, Stanley-Hogan, and Anderson (1989) studied the impact of divorce on children's development. In spite of initial stress at the time of parental separation, children often adjusted to divorce, particularly if the custodial caregiver was emotionally stable. Child temperament and parental stability had transactional effects, in that child temperamental difficulties (for example, irritability) were ameliorated or exacerbated by parental stability or instability. Furthermore, children characterized as having "easy" temperaments were less affected by parental instability.

Trauma recovery has been studied in children exposed to violence, loss of family members, and direct abuse. Even from the dire circumstances of the Holocaust, some youthful survivors appeared ultimately to be resilient. Given the previous and/or subsequent nurture of supportive families, some young Holocaust survivors grew up to become adults with strong positive characteristics, such as deep commitments to parenting, their religious community, and to broader social responsibility coupled with a "strong durability" (Moskovitz, as cited in Garmezy & Masten, 1991, p. 170).

Positive Outcomes

These diverse studies of resilience have documented similar adaptive developmental patterns despite various risks, stressors, and traumas. Resilient children and adolescents demonstrated competence in the face of adversity, and their competence serves as both "a powerful marker of resistance...as well as a marker of development" (Garmezy & Masten, 1991, p. 151). Markers of competence identified across studies included achievement orientation, school success, sociability, responsible behavior, and active involvement in school and the community (Kimchi & Schaffner, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982). Studies of successful adults with disabilities have shown similar positive outcomes, including autonomy, goal-orientation, social support networks, persistence, and adaptability (Gerber & Reiff, 1992). Positive outcomes also have been identified for low-birthweight children living in poverty (Bradley et al., 1994). Bradley and colleagues (1994) found that positive caregivers and safe housing were correlated with good health and better developmental outcomes for these children at age three years.

Ironically, for some children, stressful circumstances may hold the possibility of promise as well as threat. For example, children whose families' low incomes required childcare by extended family members sometimes benefited from the opportunity to de-

velop close, supportive relationships with caring extended family members (Werner & Smith, 1982). Although resilience studies have provided more information about alternative developmental pathways, Liddle (1994) cautioned against romanticizing the concept of resilience. Identification of positive developmental outcomes and correlated factors has the potential to influence constructive changes in policies and interventions; however, resilience is a complex and contextualized process that may require comprehensive and differentiated supports.

A former street child echoed this caution in practical terms regarding the outcomes for young Colombians who are abandoned to the street and known as gamins: "What becomes of any man? You're right, the gamins are smart and strong; they survive. But it all depends on where you go, what you find, who you meet" (cited in Felsman, 1989, p. 78). The following sections describe ways in which resilience can be fostered and specify opportunities and supports that school communities can provide to promote resilience in homeless children.

How Can Resilience be Fostered?

A protective factor model of resilience development includes child and environmental characteristics that moderate the negative impact of risks and serve as catalysts to adaptive responses (Masten et al., 1991; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). For example, students with learning disabilities who understand and reframe their disabilities to learning challenges build adaptive strategies to cope with demanding circumstances (Gerber, Reiff, & Ginsberg, 1996; Lopez-Reyna & Olufs, 1996; Morrison & Cosden, 1997; Werner, 1993). Similarly, children exposed to the risks of homelessness and low maternal self-esteem may be protected by their own problem-solving abilities and relationships with supportive teachers. This protective factor model of resilience development represents a dynamic and complex process that occurs over time and within the context of varying influences (Rutter, 1987). In a recent report of the National Institute of Mental Health (1995), resilience research was summarized.

> Studies to date suggest that there is no single source of resilience or vulnerability. Rather, many interacting factors come into play. They include not only individual genetic predispositions, which express themselves in enduring aspects of temperament, personality, and intelligence, but also qualities such as social skills and self-esteem. These, in turn, are shaped by a variety of environmental influences. (p. 25)

Important environmental influences include families, schools, and communities. In addition, collaboration across these developmental contexts enhances the effectiveness of supports to children's resilience.

How Can the School Community Promote Resilience?

School communities have been identified in various studies as key contributors to the positive adaptation and developmental outcomes of children in high-risk circumstances.

Schools can provide students with access to

- Supportive relationships with adults and peers
- Cohesive and structured learning experiences
- High expectations for achievement and participation
- Increased opportunities for self-direction and development (Oxley, 1994)

In their meta-analysis of school features that promote student learning, Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1995) found that classroom-based factors (for example, classroom management, metacognitive and cognitive processes, and student/teacher social interactions) appeared to exert greater influence on student learning than did policy and demographic features, which were more removed from the student learning experience. In combination with family support, the direct influence of school factors in promoting children's resilience has substantial research support (Kimchi & Schaffner, 1990; Wang & Gordon, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). School-based methods for promoting supportive relationships, successful learning experiences, high expectations,

and self-development opportunities are reviewed in the following sections.

Supportive Relationships

In several studies of resilient adults, teachers were mentioned as the significant role models from childhood (Kimchi & Schaffner, 1990). Teacher factors that were fundamental to students' academic and socioemotional development included responsive, supportive relationships; skills in teaching problem-solving; and provision of access to knowledge (Oxley, 1994). In the Kauai study, teachers' availability to provide counsel and guidance to developing children was an important support to resilience (Werner & Smith, 1982).

Opportunities to develop positive relationships with peers also can be fostered in schools, particularly when adults provide guidance or coaching in group learning and conflict-resolution strategies (Bickart & Wolin, 1997; Slavin, 1991; Wang et al., 1995). In a study of 24 elementary schools, students' positive engagement in school was related to their perception of school as a caring community (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995). Positive outcomes for these students included their own sense of membership in the school community, decreased dropout rates and reports of misbehavior, as well as higher academic interest and achievement.

Supportive school relationships, with staff and students, are particularly important for homeless students and their families. Frequent moving, as well as precipitating factors for moving to another location (for example, domestic violence, substance abuse, insufficient resources), confront homeless students with a series of separation experiences and/or dangerous relationships. "One of the most consistent differences between homeless and nonhomeless families is...[the] lack of even basic social supports such as nearby family members or community ties" (Nunez, 1995, p.13). Caring school communities can provide outreach to students and families who have been discouraged by frequent interruptions and disappointments in relationships. Development of positive relationships with families can have long-term benefits because "with encouragement and assistance, [homeless parents] can become partners in the educational enterprise" (Stronge, 1997, p. 20).

Cohesiveness and Structure

In a review of key factors that contributed to student achievement, Entwisle (1993) highlighted teachers' balanced approaches to establishing cohesiveness and structure within the classroom. Primarily, teachers established a balance of supportiveness and flexibility with a clear emphasis on academics. Their academic focus was evidenced by students' high level of time on task, the assignment of regular homework, consistent evaluation of assignments and progress, as well as thorough curriculum coverage. Effective teachers also maintained their emphasis on student involvement by promoting creativity and self-direction. Learning environments that were task-focused and fostered problem-solving resulted in (a) increased student effort and self-efficacy, (b) a greater sense of belonging, (c) enhanced motivation and achievement, and (d) reduced substance abuse (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994).

Flexible and well-organized instructional approaches are necessities for homeless students who may enter classrooms at any point in the year with fragmented and inconsistent academic experiences. Expedited assessments, well-coordinated support services, and focused instruction are keys in promoting the academic cohesiveness that homeless students often have lacked.

High Expectations

The Perry Preschool Project, a benchmark of early intervention effectiveness, documented the importance of high-quality early childhood programs in the development of resilience (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1989). The project used a specific curriculum model that emphasized problem-solving, social competence, and parental involvement. Although initial substantial cognitive gains appeared to diminish after several years, participating students were less likely to be retained or placed in special education. The students and their families also held higher expectations for students' achievement (Maughan, 1988). These expectations were fulfilled as higher numbers of students completed school,

maintained employment, and showed significantly lower rates of teenage pregnancy and delinquency.

High-quality early intervention services are also needed for homeless infants and preschoolers (for example, Even Start, early childhood special education) to facilitate their developmental progress. Families may not be aware of the availability of these important programs or may underestimate the importance of early learning experiences. In addition, school staff may be unaware of the increasing numbers of homeless families with very young children (Stronge, 1997).

Instructional strategies designed for high-ability students have been integrated into the curriculum to the benefit of all students, particularly students living in high poverty (Renzulli, Reis, Herbert, & Diaz, 1995). Enrichment clusters were organized around the interests of students and teachers with blocks of study time that included participation of community resource persons. Ames (1992) reviewed classroom goals and structures that supported students' long-term engagement in learning. Mastery goal orientation (as contrasted with performance orientation) was found to contribute to student persistence and to the quality of student engagement in learning challenging tasks. Teachers who emphasized a mastery goal orientation created tasks, processes, and evaluation procedures that encouraged student interests, diverse solutions, and self-evaluation. As teachers focused on the importance of "learning well" (rather than overt demonstration of achievement in competition with their peers), students with low confidence focused on problem-solving and learning strategies.

Learning environments that support high achievement are critical for helping homeless students experience educational success. Homeless students can be discouraged by their interrupted school experiences and may find transitions to another new school difficult. Instructional approaches and schoolwide activities that emphasize students' interests, problem-solving, and goal orientation may help homeless students overcome their reticence to actively engage in their new school community.

Developing Autonomy

Schools have also provided avenues for students to demonstrate accomplishments through enrichment and extracurricular activities. These activities incorporate students' interests and talents, provide opportunities for positive peer relationships, and encourage linkages to mentoring relationships (Masten et al., 1991; Wang & Gordon, 1994). Within these enrichment and extracurricular experiences, students have increased opportunities to develop self-direction, goal orientation, and social responsibility. One of the central themes in the study by Battistich et al. (1995) was student adoption of core values, including responsibility for helping each other. Students' prosocial behavior was related to their perception of opportunities to provide meaningful input into the school community. The positive impact of these experiences was significantly greater in the highest-poverty schools.

The potential for academic achievement and talent development may go unnoticed in homeless students who face considerable physical and emotional challenges. Although addressing basic food, shelter, and clothing needs are essential, schools also can nurture the artistic, academic, athletic, and leadership gifts in homeless students. Interest- and talent-enhancing activities can create safe avenues for self-expression and accomplishment that build the self-esteem of homeless students and their confidence in their own potential.

Direct instruction in self-determination also has been employed to develop students' skills in the areas of planning, self-advocacy, and decision making. These direct instruction strategies also emphasize students' self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-monitoring. These skills relate to students' goal orientation and positive self-appraisal—factors that are associated with resilience, independence, and life satisfaction (Reiff, Gerber, & Ginsberg, 1996; Werner & Smith, 1992). Applying self-determination concepts in supporting homeless students requires careful assessment. Whereas some homeless students have grown fearful and insecure, others have become accustomed to shouldering adult responsibilities within their families (for example, securing food or temporary support). Depending

on their experiences and responses to homelessness, students' self-determination concerns can range widely from daily tasks to long-range plans for education and employment.

What Are the Roles of School Personnel in Fostering the Resilience of Homeless Students?

In crafting a comprehensive approach to supporting the resilience of homeless students, each member of the school community plays an important role. In this section, resilience promotion strategies will be highlighted for different members of the school community, including school support staff, administrators, instructional personnel, and specialists as well as other students and their families. Roles and strategies are identified that emphasize key protective factors in promoting resilience—supportive relationships, cohesiveness and structure, high expectations, and autonomy granting. Clearly, some strategies are appropriate for implementation by multiple school members and can be provided through a team approach. Suggestions for organizing school-based teams follow the descriptions of role-related strategies for building successful school experiences for homeless students.

The Role of Office Staff and Bus Drivers

Office staff (including secretaries, attendance officers, and family-community liaisons) usually are the first school contact for homeless students and their families. Their initial welcome is essential to establishing positive connections and setting the stage for smooth school entry and ongoing participation. Eisenberg (1995) described these organizational roles as "boundary spanners" because of their focus on communication across groups. "Unfortunately, their training and development is often neglected by their employers" (Eisenberg, 1995, p. 113). Bus drivers also serve as boundary spanners because of their frequent opportunities for communication with families, shelter staff, and school personnel.

Because students who are homeless have special legal protections in enrollment and transportation procedures, it is essential that office staff and bus drivers are included in school-based planning, staff development, and program monitoring. Their experiences may yield important suggestions for improving strategies to support homeless students. In Baltimore County, Maryland, one bus driver developed a creative solution to protect the confidentiality of a student's shelter residence. He altered his route so that the homeless student was picked up first and dropped off last. Secretaries in another school stored homeless students' backpacks in the office. These students didn't want their classmates to discover that they brought all of their possessions to school because they might be stolen in the shelter.

When these important staff members are excluded from school-wide plans, homeless students can be literally turned away at the schoolhouse door. Administrative support for flexible procedures and sensitive attitudes promotes the welcoming and supportive role of these important boundary spanners. In addition, their positive attitudes and creative suggestions provide an excellent model of cooperation and empathy for other members of the school community.

The Role of Principals

The leadership role of principals (and other school district administrators) lies at the heart of creating schools that effectively support students who are homeless. Principal Carole Williams of B. F. Day Elementary School in Seattle, Washington, is an excellent example of the visionary leadership needed to stimulate awareness, compassion, and action within the school community. When Ms. Williams realized that some B. F. Day Children were homeless, she determined

> I could no longer think of the school as solely an educational agency. Nor could I continue to play the role of a bureaucratic administrator.... If this school was going to change its course and assume more than academic responsibility for its students, it would require a collaboration of minds, hearts, and hands. (cited in Quint, 1994, p. 5)

With her leadership, teachers, support staff, and community volunteers coalesced as a team to study the needs of homeless children and developed an exemplary program to foster their inclusion and growth within the school community. With increased understanding of and a heightened concern for the challenges of homelessness, members of the school community can actively participate in program assessment and planning. Principal leadership is important as the school team examines current policies, practices, and resources–an important step in crafting a building-level plan. Specifically, a school plan to support homeless students should address the following:

- Development of strategies for school staff to collaborate with shelter personnel and homeless families
- Alignment of enrollment and transportation policies and procedures with the McKinney Act requirements
- Refinement of transition procedures (for example, within and across schools)
- Creation of flexible assessment, instructional, and course credit options
- Clarification of staff roles and program coordination mechanisms
- Identification of program options and services (for example, preschool, family literacy, talent development, special education, Title I, English as a Second Language, counseling)
- Collaboration with community organizations (for example, universities, businesses, civic groups)
- An ongoing evaluation of the school plan

In addition to providing leadership for the schoolwide plan, the principal's role includes clarifying, supporting, and monitoring enrollment, transportation, transition, instructional, and communication procedures. Ongoing staff development (through staff meetings, workshops, and study groups) as well as supervision (for individual and team responsibilities) are essential for the implementation of more responsive policies and interventions for homeless students.

The Role of Instructional Staff

Instructional staff, including classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, resource teachers (for example, gifted, ESL, special education, Title I, music), and specialists (for example, media, reading, transition) can provide daily support for the school success of their homeless students. As instructional staff increase their knowledge of homeless students' characteristics, early identification and referral for additional support services (such as health care, counseling, tutoring) can be improved. Effective inclusion of homeless students also requires planning transition supports (for example, orientation, school supplies), expediting assessments (for example, contact with previous school, informal interview, curriculum-based assessment), and considering the full-range of educational programs. In addition, communication and cooperation by instructional staff within the school community and with families are essential in creating a safety net for homeless students. In some communities, shelter workers and instructional staff visit each others' facilities each year to learn more about school and shelter environments. Realistic plans for ongoing communication among instructional staff, families, and shelter staff (for example, newsletters, school calendars, homework hotlines) result in better tutoring and homework support for homeless students.

Because homeless families move frequently, the evaluations of homeless students for specialized services may be incomplete (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 1996). Classroom observation and informal assessments by instructional staff can be invaluable to child study committees in expediting evaluations for special education or other support programs. Although homeless students experience gaps in learning, they may also have special talents and interests that increase their motivation for learning and school participation. Interest inventories, informal interviews, and observation during instructional activities can provide important information about building students' engagement in

learning. Creation of appropriate instructional accommodations (such as modified homework assignments, study guides, independent study, enrichment activities) will be supported by expedited assessments of students' strengths, interests, and needs.

Heightened awareness and sensitivity is important in creating a classroom environment of caring relationships, positive expectations, and appropriate accommodations. Instructional staff can structure opportunities for classes to learn about homelessness while protecting the confidentiality of individual students. All students can benefit from instruction in problem-solving, cooperation, shared decision making, and other resilience-oriented skills. Learning about and practicing skills in self-determination creates a positive classroom environment, based on students' self-awareness, responsibility, and self-monitoring. Opportunities for positive peer relations also can be fostered through structured cooperative learning activities as well as through modeling by instructional staff.

The Roles of School Psychologists and Counselors

School psychologists and counselors play important roles in the inclusion of homeless students in the school community through support to staff, students, and families. Assistance to staff may include staff development or individual consultation regarding indicators of homelessness, classroom-based accommodations, and expedited assessment. School psychologists and counselors facilitate smooth transitions for students and families through consultation with sending and receiving schools. In addition, these professionals often serve and provide connections across program levels (preschool, elementary, and secondary) and district-wide programs (family literacy, vocational evaluations, magnet schools, parenting education). Links to other educational programs can enhance transition planning, staff development, and educational options for homeless children and youth.

Direct interaction with homeless students may include small group sessions in developing problem-solving, decision making, and social skills, as well as study strategies. In addition, students and their families may receive individual or family counseling regarding adjustment issues and the complex circumstances of homelessness. School psychologists and counselors can serve as liaisons with community treatment programs for substance abuse, domestic violence, and child protection.

School psychologists and counselors can facilitate family, school, and shelter partnerships through cooperative projects, such as family literacy workshops. In collaboration with other members of the school community and shelters, such workshops provide families with transportation to school, dinner, and parent-child activities. While parents learn about nutrition, community resources, and parenting, children participate in enrichment, recreation, or tutoring activities. In addition, consultation with instructional staff about family issues and methods for support can facilitate successful family-school collaboration.

The Roles of School Nurses and Social Workers

Health and family issues of homeless children and youth may be addressed by school nurses and social workers. Their specialized knowledge may be helpful to other staff members and students who are unfamiliar with the problems associated with extreme poverty and the basic needs of homeless children and youth. Because these concerns often impinge on students' school participation and success, nurses and social workers also may serve as the school-based liaison or main point of contact for homeless students.

For the school-based team, nurses and social workers have links with critical services, such as medical and dental care, adult education and employment support programs, and housing and food support. With families and students, they can provide information about reliable and accessible community programs and help families request services. As resources to families, these professionals also may provide instruction in first aid, safety, nutrition, and self-advocacy. In addition, school nurses and social workers may be effective in retrieving necessary medical records or obtaining immunizations and medical/dental treatment for students.

Fostering collaboration with community agencies and volunteers is another role for school nurses and social workers. These cooperative efforts may include organizing tutoring and mentoring partners, establishing food and clothing closets, providing school supplies, as well as scholarships for enrichment activities (for example, summer camp, music instruction, computer clubs).

The Roles of Other Students and Their Families

Other students and their families can benefit through opportunities to learn about and respond to homelessness. Guest speakers about homelessness can be included in parent-teacher meetings. Awareness activities can be followed by the identification of supportive actions, such as establishing clothing, food, and school supply closets or volunteer tutoring programs. Some parent volunteers have created programs such as "breakfast and book buddies." These programs organize volunteers who meet homeless students at school for breakfast, to provide the students with books and shared reading time. Some families may choose to befriend a homeless student through inclusion in after-school activities (for example, soccer or community library activities). Other families can link corporate sponsors to school-based support programs (for example, enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, school supplies).

With guidance, students can serve as peer mentors by modeling competent, supportive, and cooperative behavior. Curriculum materials about homelessness that are appropriate for students can be purchased for the school library or integrated into the curriculum. Older students also have opportunities to develop awareness and specific interventions through service-learning programs. For example, high school students may organize recreation activities and homework support programs in shelters. These experiences can stimulate understanding, compassion, and commitment–key aspects of resilience-oriented school communities. Although each of these school community members plays an important role in fostering the resilience of homeless students, more progress can be made when these individuals work together as teams. The following section suggests strategies for organizing school-based teams to support homeless students.

The Role of Teamwork

The diverse challenges of homelessness for children and youth require the talents of various members of the school community. Each team member has specific roles, skills, opportunities, and resources to contribute in the development of support strategies for homeless students and families. To coordinate and enhance these individual contributions, team members must work together to identify students' needs and compare these with school-based and community resources. Through team planning activities, gaps and overlaps in supports to students and families can be identified. Action plans (that specify desired outcomes, roles, responsibilities, and timelines) create blueprints for coordinated teamwork. Careful attention to communication and action plan monitoring also helps the team accomplish and revise support plans for homeless students.

Individually and collaboratively, school personnel have important roles in fostering the resilience of homeless students. By implementing and coordinating various support strategies, school personnel can activate basic resilience intervention principles. These principles include the following:

- Reducing vulnerability and risk
- Reducing interaction with or intensity of stressors
- Increasing available resources
- Mobilizing protective processes (Masten, 1994, p. 15)

Table 1 provides a graphic summary of the relationships among school-based roles, support strategies, and resilience intervention principles. This table can be used by individuals and teams within the school community to help direct and focus efforts to foster the resilience of homeless children and youth.

Table 1
School Roles, Strategies, and Resilience Principles

School Roles and Strategies	Resilience Principles[a] 1	2	3	4
Office staff and bus driver				
Welcome all students and families	x		x	
Smooth enrollment/transportation	x	x	x	x
Retrieve/transfer educational records		x		x
Respect confidentiality		x		x
Model cooperation and empathy	x		x	
Principal				
Lead in awareness/planning	x	x		x
Clarify policies and procedures	x	x		x
Support flexible instruction		x		x
Stimulate program coordination	x		x	
Promote strength-oriented services				x
Target school-family-shelter links		x	x	
Tap broader community resources			x	
Instructional staff				
Increase awareness of homelessness				x
Support transition into new school			x	x
Provide accommodations		x		
Foster positive peer interactions		x		
Use full range of educational services		x	x	x
Maintain high, realistic expectations				x
Teach problem-solving and social skills			x	x
Link with other support services		x	x	
Communicate with families and shelters	x		x	x
School psychologist and counselor				
Consult with staff regarding homelessness			x	
Provide inservice regarding supports				x
Promote links across school levels	x	x		x
Facilitate assessments			x	x
Provide small group support		x	x	
Facilitate family-school-shelter links	x	x	x	
School nurse and social worker				
Retrieve and transfer records		x		x
Locate community resources and services	x		x	
Help families request services	x		x	
Support health/nutrition and parenting			x	
Serve as primary liaison	x	x	x	x
Students and families				
Learn about homelessness				x
Support homeless students	x			x
Create emergency supply closets	x	x	x	

a. Resilience principles: 1 = reduce vulnerability and risk, 2 = reduce stressors, 3 = increase resources, 4 = mobilize protective factors.

Conclusion

I Want My Old Life Back

"I miss my friends, meals with just my family, watching whatever I wanted on TV.
I miss our dog Oliver and our cat Hardy, new clothes, my own bed.
I miss my space, my privacy, the quiet.
I want my old life back."

—Cara, age 12[2]

"For a while we were sleeping in our car. That was scary. And it was cold, too. My dad had to wake up and start the car and turn on the heater so we wouldn't freeze. I slept on the back seat, but it was hard to get comfortable, and we were hungry all the time.... I don't want to make friends here because my dad says we will probably leave soon.... I don't know what's going to happen."

—David, age 10[3]

Cara's and David's stories reflect the reality of children's experience of homelessness. And the instability and pressures faced by these children challenge educators' basic assumptions about students' lives. By applying the rich resources of school communities—caring and competent staff, families, and students—Cara's and David's stories could have different endings. Genuine inclusion, well-planned supports, increased resources, and strong coordination can be provided to help homeless students and families establish stability and membership in the community. The director of a comprehensive program for homeless students (sponsored by the Homes for the Homeless) summarized some of the basic premises of resilience promotion.

> We talk about what it feels like to be homeless and tell them that they have to realize their family is going through a rough time, but that it's temporary, and they won't be there forever.... "You're going to survive this and be stronger from it," I say. Through our encouragement and focus on their strengths and abilities, they begin to see for themselves what they can achieve. (Nunez, 1996, p. 109)

The development of these protective roles within schools, families, and communities can contribute to the hope and resilience of our students who face the complex and difficult challenges of homelessness.

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A Long Road Ahead: A Progress Report on Educating Homeless Children and Youth in America

Stronge, James H. (1997). "A Long Road Ahead: A Progress Report on Educating Homeless Children and Youth in America." *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 3 (2), 13-31. Reprinted with permission.

The plight of contemporary homelessness in American society has been well documented, including the growth in homeless families with school-age homeless children and independent homeless youth. The impact of homelessness on schools and schooling has resulted in a school-age population with complex problems for which no simple solutions exist. This article chronicles the progress made in recent years in addressing the educational needs of homeless children and youth in America and notes particular areas of concern that remain to be solved if education is to hold a meaningful place in their disrupted lives. Specifically, concerns regarding awareness and perceptions of homelessness, early childhood educational needs, intervention with special populations, interagency collaboration in service delivery, and the need for comprehensive evaluations of homeless education efforts are discussed. Additionally, suggestions for improving policy and practice salient to educating homeless students are offered.

> "And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep."
> — "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Robert Frost

Introduction

Homeless children and youth are arguably the most at risk of any identifiable student population for school failure, if not outright omission (Stronge, 1993b). On a daily basis, these students often face economic deprivation, family loss or separation, insecurity, social and emotional instability, and, in general, upheaval in their lives (Bassuk & Rosenberg, 1988; Nunez, 1994; Rafferty, 1995; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989; Quint, 1994; Stronge, 1992). Against this backdrop, efforts to make education accessible and meaningful for them and their families is like swimming upstream against a swift current. These students deserve the opportunity to attend and succeed in school—an opportunity paramount to achieving success in life and thus breaking the hold of poverty and deprivation on their lives. If this opportunity to succeed is to be achieved, homeless students and their families need the concerted efforts of the educational community.

The purpose of this article is to chronicle the progress made in recent years in the provision of an appropriate educational opportunity for homeless children and youth in America and to note particular areas of concern that remain. Specifically, concerns regarding awareness and perceptions of homelessness, early childhood education needs, dealing with special populations, accomplishing interagency collaboration in service delivery, and the need for comprehensive evaluations of homeless education efforts will be discussed. Additionally, suggestions for improving policy and practice salient to educating homeless students will be offered.

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Background

Family and youth homelessness. While homelessness in American society has been well documented throughout our history (see, for example, Levitan & Schillmoeller, 1991), the emergence of large numbers of homeless families and school-age homeless children and youth has resulted in a nagging and persistent problem (Stronge, 1993b; Stronge, 1995). There is general agreement that families with children are increasingly represented in poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 1995; National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990, 1996/97; Nunez, 1995; U.S. Census Bureau, 1994) and in the growing homeless population (McChesney, 1993; Nunez, 1994; Nunez, 1995; Waxman, 1993).

Nunez (1995), in describing what he called the "new American poverty," characterized the American homeless population as "composed of more families and children than ever before" (p. 7). Bassuk & Rosenberg (1988) found that more than three-fourths of homeless families were single-parent families headed by women. Further clarifying the make-up of family homelessness, Nunez (1994) found the typical homeless family head-of-household to be "a young, single woman without a high school diploma or substantial work experience" (p. 14). More specifically, a 1992 Institute for Children and Poverty profile of homeless heads-of-household in New York City reported that 97 percent were female, of which 87 percent were unmarried, 56 percent were under age 25, 63 percent did not have a high school diploma, 71 percent had a history of substance abuse, and 43 percent had experienced domestic violence (cited in Nunez, 1994). Family (particularly single-mother families) undereducation, poverty, abuse, and abusive lifestyles translate directly to child poverty. For example, the National Center for Children in Poverty (1990) found that more than half of all poor children in America lived with single mothers. The National Center for Family Literacy (no date, p. 2) reported that children "whose parents are undereducated are at grave risk of continuing the cycle," and that fewer of their children are in preschool programs; more are early school failures and high school dropouts than are the children of better educated parents. When families with school-age children are viewed in conjunction with independent homeless adolescents, the net result is a significant and growing homeless population of school-age students.

Federal response to homelessness. In response to school-age homelessness, Congress enacted the education portion of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987 (P.L. 100-77) and, subsequently, has reauthorized the Act twice, in 1990 (P.L. 101-645) and 1994 (P.L. 103-382). The McKinney Act was enacted as America's first comprehensive emergency aid program for homeless individuals. Congressional policy reflected in the educational portion of the Act (Subtitle B - Education for Homeless Children and Youth) was based on: 1) each state education agency assuring that homeless students have access to a free, appropriate public education, which would be provided to the children of a resident of a state and consistent with the state school attendance laws, and 2) in any state that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory school attendance laws, the state was to review and undertake steps to revise such laws to ensure that homeless students were afforded a free and appropriate public education (42 USC 11431). Additionally, in an effort to clarify the right of homeless students to enjoy the full range of educational programs that their regularly housed peers enjoyed, specific academic and educational support services to which homeless students are entitled were identified in the Act. The operable concept with this legislation was access to appropriate educational services for homeless students.

The 1990 Amendments to the Act (P.L. 101-645) reflected an even greater intolerance to any barrier that prohibited the enrollment of homeless children and youth. However, the key revision in the legislation was to expand Congressional policy to require states to review and undertake steps to revise "other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless chil-

dren and homeless youth" [Section 721 (2)] (emphasis added). Thus, Congressional intent expanded from access to success in school (Helm, 1993; Stronge, 1993a).

The McKinney Act was amended most recently as part of the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* (P.L. 103-382). The changes in the law allow states to incorporate the McKinney Act in consolidated state plans. The intent of consolidating a state's eligible federal programs into a single, comprehensive plan is "to improve teaching and learning by encouraging greater cross-program coordination, planning, and service delivery; enhance integration of programs with educational activities carried out with state and local funds; and promote the state educational goals for all students while effectively meeting the needs of the programs' intended beneficiaries" (U.S. Department of Education, 1995, p. 4-5). As it relates to homeless education, this change in the federal law is designed to provide homeless students with greater access to other federally supported educational programs (for example, Title I, Compensatory Education). Additional changes in the 1994 Amendments included a revised timeline and process for estimating the number of homeless children and youth, inclusion of early childhood education as a priority target area, and an enhanced emphasis on coordination among state education agencies, social services agencies, and other agencies providing services to homeless children and youth and their families. Otherwise, the Act continued to stress the previously stated Congressional policy of providing homeless students with greater access to and success in school. Particular activities described in the Act [Section 723(d)] that are intended to facilitate access and success include

- Educational services–such as tutoring, before- and after-school programs, developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, expedited evaluations, and education and training programs for parents
- Professional development–designed to raise awareness among educators and others
- Coordination of services–provided by schools and other agencies
- Comprehensive services–such as referrals for medical, dental, mental, and other health services; counseling; and programs to address the particular needs arising from domestic violence
- Transportation–to pay the excess cost of transporting homeless students to school
- School records–to pay costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records
- School supplies–to provide supplies for non-school facilities and provide school supplies
- Extraordinary or emergency assistance–to be provided as necessary to enroll and retain homeless students in school

On the Road to Success

The concerted efforts by Congress, state education agencies, local school districts, shelter providers, and a host of other public and private agencies to assist homeless students and their families is beginning to yield dividends. One area of improvement in homeless education is increased accessibility through changes in state residency requirements for homeless students. Prior to the implementation of the McKinney Act, bona fide residency was a significant enrollment barrier, with attempts to enroll homeless students sometimes resulting in litigation (Rafferty, 1995; Stronge & Helm, 1991). A recent study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education (Anderson, Janger, & Panton, 1995) that "with few exceptions, states have reviewed and revised their laws, regulations, and policies to remove obstacles to the education of homeless children and youth. They report a high level of success in identifying and eliminating those barriers once posed by policies on residency and school records" (p. vi). Despite the removal, generally, of residency as an enrollment barrier, other requirements related to enrollment (immunization and guardianship) persist and are not so easily modified. Moreover, even with improved access through removal of residency barriers, "homeless

students in different districts within the same state often have uneven access to educational services. State policies exempting homeless students from enrollment requirements do not eliminate barriers unless schools and districts are aware of and enforce these policies" (Anderson et al., 1995, p. iii).

Another indicator of improved educational opportunity for homeless students can be found in school attendance rates. Anderson et al. (1995) found that the average school attendance rate for identified homeless students in elementary, middle, and high school was 86 percent. This contrasts with estimates from only a few years earlier of attendance rates of 69 percent for homeless students (U.S. Department of Education, 1989). While this improvement in attendance is encouraging news, a closer look reveals significant concerns. For one, the 86-percent attendance rate is based upon identified homeless students. Since homeless counts frequently draw heavily upon stays in homeless shelters, non-sheltered homeless individuals may well not be included in these figures. In fact, fewer than half of all homeless children and youth live in shelters, with 56 percent living on the streets, doubling up with relatives or friends, and residing in a variety of other settings (Anderson et al., 1995).

Even if homeless children and youth were enrolled in and attending school regularly, there is no guarantee of their succeeding once in school. Getting children into the schoolhouse door isn't enough; they must enjoy success once there (Stronge, 1993a). An emerging line of study for homeless students that points to success is building resiliency in children by emphasizing constructive strategies which enhance individual, family, school, and community protective factors (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997).

Given the above indicators, we can point to improvements in the accessibility, appropriateness, and promise of education for homeless students. However, if access and success in school are to become a reality for all homeless children and youth, we have miles to go.

And Miles to Go . . .

Persistent barriers to improved educational opportunities, indeed, to improved lives for homeless children and youth include awareness issues, parental involvement and support, early childhood education opportunities, special needs of special populations, collaboration in service delivery, and the need for comprehensive evaluations. These, in turn, will be discussed in the following section.

Lack of Awareness and Misperceptions. One of the problems that continues to plague homeless education efforts is a lack of understanding of the needs of homeless students and their right to an appropriate education. Matters as simple as the school secretary denying parents the opportunity to enroll their child in school because the child "doesn't live in the attendance zone" or as complex as insensitivity and rejection by classmates and teachers (Eddowes & Hranitz, 1988) can effectively block a homeless student's opportunity to receive an education. Studies have recorded a persistent pattern of insensitivity toward homeless students, a problem that stems from a lack of awareness.

A related problem is that of misperceptions regarding the nature of homelessness. "The homeless" are not one undifferentiated mass; rather "children and their families are homeless for different reasons, ranging from unemployment to escaping domestic violence to parental drug abuse. Children in each of these situations have their special concerns" (McChesney, 1993, p. 377). There is substantial variability in the type and severity of homeless-related problems experienced within the spectrum of homelessness, ranging from individuals who are first-time homeless and are only temporarily in this condition to others who are chronically homeless, "individuals/families who have been defined as or are likely to be among the ranks of the homeless for the near future and who have little desire/ability to eliminate their homeless condition" (Stronge, 1993a, p. 354-55).

Before educational opportunity can become a reality, the lack of awareness and its related problems need to be addressed (First & Oakley, 1993). As a start, sensitivity and awareness training for school

personnel should be provided (Rafferty, 1995). However, evidence suggests that sensitizing the school staff may not be enough; rather, educating community members and parents of non-homeless students may be necessary. Strategies employed in most states and many school districts to raise awareness include appointing liaisons at the district and school level, staff development, materials development and distribution, and face-to-face meetings with key constituents (Anderson et al., 1995).

Parental Involvement and Support. Parental involvement and support are essential if education is to become and remain a priority for homeless children. Despite the fact that homeless families typically are lacking in family strength, parents are not lacking in concern and aspirations for their children. With encouragement and assistance, they can become partners in the educational enterprise. Gonzalez (1992) captured the essence of this sentiment well: "One cannot provide a supportive climate for homeless children without soliciting the help of the parents" (p. 200). In an effort to facilitate the creation of a supportive climate, she offered the following guidance:

- Foster positive and consistent communication with parents.
- Build trust between parents and school staff.
- Provide a "personal touch" in lieu of an air of professionalism.
- Demonstrate how parents can assist with school work.
- Provide training that includes parenting skills, parental assistance by subject and grade level, preventing or overcoming substance abuse, availability of community services, improving parents' basic skills, and discipline techniques.

Early childhood education opportunities. The research is replete with evidence from programs such as the Perry Preschool Program that starting early is paramount for success in learning, particularly for children from impoverished backgrounds (Maughan, 1988). Young homeless children, in particular, have little stability in their lives and lack the comfort, nutritional requirements, and health support necessary for normal development. Additionally, they frequently experience language, cognitive, and behavioral problems (Eddowes, 1993). Issues as practical as a safe place to play can be important: "...the absence of easy access to safe outdoor play can be a significant impediment..." to parenting and child development (Bartlett, p. 47).

Despite the overwhelming evidence for the need for early intervention and the call for special attention to early childhood education in the 1994 Amendments to the McKinney Act, early childhood education initiatives continue to lag behind other efforts. For example, Nunez (1994) reported from a New York City study that "nearly 80 percent of school-age children had not attended any school prior to kindergarten" (p. 70). Moreover, the critical need for early childhood education is reflected in the finding that homeless families frequently include two-to-three children under age five (Kling, Dunn, & Oakley, 1996).

The importance of having slots available in high-quality childcare programs when they are needed is critical if the problem of nonparticipation is to be alleviated (Eddowes, 1993). Program access is a particularly acute problem due to the fact that demand typically exceeds supply in early childhood programs. Coupled with this supply-demand problem is the fact that homeless children move in and out of a community and thus are frequently not in line for a slot in a program. A potential solution to this dilemma is to hold a few slots open in programs like Even Start for homeless children; rather than a slot being filled by a single child for the duration of the program, it could be filled by numerous homeless children as their families move in and out of the community.

Eddowes (1992) and Kling et al. (1996) offered several practical suggestions to consider in developing solutions to early intervention for homeless children, including

- Personnel working in the programs should provide consistent, sensitive, individualized relationships with the children.
- A relatively stable schedule is necessary, with the same staff caring for the same children daily.
- Staff training is necessary to help build an understanding of children at risk.
- Programs should provide for both basic and personal needs of the children.
- Staff should model safe health practices and encourage the children to emulate them.
- Ample space should be provided to encourage the development of gross and fine motor development.
- Simple rules for behavior and care are important.
- Staff members should model standard English and provide a variety of daily language activities.
- Staff should reach out to the parents.
- Provide assistance to parents in obtaining necessary documents (for example, immunization records, birth certificates) for enrolling in programs.
- When practical, involve parents in the school program through volunteer opportunities and various special activities (for example, parent day, holiday activities).
- Help parents connect with support groups and community services.

Dealing with special populations. As has been noted previously, homelessness is not unidimensional; each homeless student is an individual with unique needs. However, within the homeless student population, there are discernible subgroups whose similar educational needs are particularly resistant to effective intervention. Among these subgroups are independent youth and students with disabilities.

Powers and Jaklitsch (1992) noted that "although homelessness among adolescents is not a new social problem, over the past several decades, it has increased in volume, scope, and visibility" (p. 117). Whether they choose to leave home (that is, runaways) or are forced to leave home (that is, throwaways), "the consequences of homelessness can be devastating for young people" (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993, p. 394). A variety of barriers can serve to effectively separate homeless youth from education, including the effects of street life, substance abuse, living conditions, health problems, family background, developmental lags, and emotional and psychological problems (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993). Anderson et al. (1995) noted the extreme barriers that homeless youth face in merely accessing school.

> Efforts to curb crime or ensure school safety may impede enrollment for homeless teens. For example, curfew laws make them guilty of a crime just because they have no place to go. Schools in some states refuse to admit homeless teens due to liability concerns. . . . In terms of McKinney-funded services, few . . .LEAs. . . provided instructional services to older students. (p. ii)

While there are no simple solutions for getting homeless teens in school and helping them succeed once there, certain strategies can be usefully employed. Vissing, Schroepfer, and Bloise (1994) suggested that independent homeless youth be offered assistance in an effort to accommodate childcare responsibilities, job requirements, the absence of home libraries and places suitable for study, and a host of related problems they encounter. Providing flexibility in school policies and procedures such as admissions criteria, attendance policies, course offerings, and class assignments can be paramount to getting adolescents in school and keeping them there. Additionally, assisting with emotional support, making community resources accessible, and providing special services such as special education and transportation are vital.

Another identifiable homeless subpopulation with particularly acute needs consists of students with disabilities. "Several factors mitigate against home-

less students with disabilities receiving education, let alone special education services" (Korinek, Walther-Thomas, & Laycock, 1992, p. 135). Factors such as transiency, difficulty in transferring records, etc., make it difficult to access specialized educational services on a timely basis. Even the stipulations within special education statutes designed to bring services to eligible students can serve as formidable barriers to their education. For example, special education procedural due process rights found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476) can result in service delivery timelines that are incompatible with homeless lifestyles. "Procedural safeguards designed to protect the due process rights of students with disabilities and to provide maximum involvement of parents set an evaluation pace that makes it difficult to qualify these students for services" (Korinek et al., p. 142). By the time a referral has been made, eligibility has been determined, and a placement can be provided, homeless students may well have moved to a neighboring school district or across the country.

Because factors both within the schools (that is, organizational characteristics, due process procedures) and within the lifestyle of homeless individuals can contribute to delays or loss of services, special attention to these obstacles must be provided if appropriate (and on many occasions, if any) education is to be provided to needy students. In an effort to address these concerns, Korinek et al. (1992) developed a set of program considerations that can help minimize the problems associated with homeless students and special education. Indeed, their suggestions for support might well serve as practical guidance for the delivery of any specialized services to homeless children and independent homeless youth.

- Collaboration with shelters, social service providers, and parents is vital in order to coordinate efforts.
- School leadership that actively supports the ethical and legal requirements to provide specialized education services is essential.
- Expedited access to records and services can facilitate school access.
- Peer involvement in which a climate of acceptance and support for all students is fostered can enhance school success.
- Individualized programs for basic literacy, gifted education, or a host of other alternatives can also facilitate success in school.
- Staff development programs that are carefully crafted to sensitize school personnel to the effects of homelessness, to facilitate homeless students' success in school, and to provide a commitment for a structured, stable, and nonthreatening environment should be provided.
- Transitional planning should begin the first day the student arrives because of the likelihood that a move is imminent for a child and family or an independent youth.

Coordination and Collaboration in Service Delivery. A coordinated, collaborative approach to education seems to be especially important when dealing with homeless students. It would be presumptuous to believe that schools, alone, can solve the problems of the homeless. Although education is fundamental to breaking the grip of poverty (Stronge, 1993a), the problems associated with homelessness are multidimensional and rooted in the broader community; so, too, must the solutions to homelessness be multidimensional and based squarely in the broader community.

The McKinney Act requires that each state ensure that coordination among agencies (that is, state department of education, local school districts, other public and community agencies) serving homeless individuals is emphasized (P.L. 103-382). As Anderson et al. (1995) noted

> Coordination and collaboration focus on identifying available services and resources and communicating this information to those in need. By promoting coordination and collaboration locally, states have enabled

school districts and service providers to stretch their available resources and thus be able to better serve homeless children and youth. (p. 36)

Using Melaville and Blank's (1991) framework, Yon, Mickelson, and Carlton-LaNey (1993) described five variables that have been found to be effective in shaping interagency partnerships.

- Promote a social and political climate in which the community, key decision makers, and service providers support one another and make collaboration a top priority.
- Develop a process of collaboration in which partners accept the goals of others and attempt to resolve difficulties as they arise.
- The quality of leadership of the people who are part of interagency partnerships is critical, and their efforts should build on their collective vision, commitment, and competence.
- Because collaborative efforts frequently bring together agencies with differing, if not competing, agendas, it is essential that the agencies establish policies that encourage cooperation rather than competition.
- For collaborative ventures to succeed in either coordinating existing services or in creating new services, resources must be pooled or reconfigured to meet the needs of the target homeless population.

Need for Comprehensive Evaluations of Efforts. On a general evaluative level, Helm (1993) found that the effectiveness of the McKinney Act during its early years was diminished by four key factors: a) a narrow legislative focus with the Act addressing only issues of access to school and not success in school, b) inadequate funding, c) noncompliance of state and federal agencies, and d) weak provisions within the Act for purposes of enforcement. Recognizing the need for systematic collection of evaluative information regarding the efficacy of the McKinney Act, the U. S. Department of Education commissioned an evaluation of state and local efforts to serve homeless students (Anderson et al., 1995). This national evaluation provides the most comprehensive view to date of the state-of-affairs of homeless education. Findings from the study revealed evidence across the 50 states and U.S. territories of progress in eliminating some barriers to school enrollment and attendance. However, the study focused most heavily on access issues and compliance with specific regulations contained within the McKinney Act; little evidence was presented regarding what works in enhancing school success for homeless students. For example, the evaluation found that subgrants to local school districts supported a variety of activities (for example, before- and after-school tutoring, awareness raising) but did not attempt to determine how well those activities worked. In fact, the authors of the evaluation found that few local school districts "with McKinney subgrants measure program impacts on the academic achievement, attitude, self-esteem, and school access and attendance of homeless children and youth" (p. xv).

We lack evidence of what intervention strategies work and, subsequently, how future efforts should be targeted. Almost ten years into the enactment of the McKinney Act, answers to questions of effectiveness must be addressed in a systematic and comprehensive fashion. And, most importantly, the most fundamental of questions begs attention: are homeless students succeeding in school and breaking the grip of homelessness?

Conclusion

Consensus regarding the effectiveness of efforts to educate homeless students, generally, and the McKinney Act, specifically, is that progress has been made in recent years. There are fewer lawsuits required to secure enrollment of homeless students, fewer denials of access to public schools, and greater percentages of identified homeless students enrolled in school. And meager as it may be, funding for education through the McKinney Act is intact and does serve as a catalyst for states and local school districts to offer improved educational opportunities for homeless students.

Unfortunately, to date, progress has been slow and, at best, uneven. In a summary of evaluation results to date, the National Association of state Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1997) found results inconclusive.

> On the one hand, they indicate that state coordinators and their local counterparts have made measurable progress in reducing some of the institutional and procedural barriers to public school access that have historically prevented homeless children from enrolling and succeeding in school. On the other hand, they show that other barriers, some of which are new, continue to plague homeless students' ability to fully participate in and benefit from public education. (p. 3)

> For example, despite the fact that, on average, states awarded 71 percent of their 1993-94 McKinney Act grant allocations directly to local school districts for services for homeless students, only three percent of LEAs nationwide received any funding. Clearly, this fact suggests that "the absolute number of homeless children and youth who are benefiting from special programs and services under [McKinney Act] subgrants—as opposed to general statewide homeless advocacy efforts—is not very great." (Anderson et al., 1995, p. xiv)

Homelessness in America among school-age children and youth isn't disappearing; indeed, since 1991 the number of homeless children and youth identified and reported has more than doubled (LeTendre, 1995). And there remain numerous obstacles to overcome if homeless students are to enjoy any significant degree of success in school and throughout their lives. We have traveled some distance since the education of homeless students became a discernible problem in America, but we haven't arrived at the destination. We have miles to go before we sleep.

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Educating Homeless Children and Youth with Dignity and Care

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A dramatic increase in the number of homeless families with school-age children and of independent homeless youth has occurred in recent years. Because of the unique problems posed by these students, their educational and concomitant needs typically have not been addressed well by the greater educational community. This article serves as an introduction to issues related to educating homeless students. Promising practices for either eliminating or minimizing the deleterious effects of homelessness on the educational opportunities of students are discussed. Specifically, strategies are offered for building awareness, increasing and supporting parental involvement, providing early intervention, and coordinating services for the education of one of America's most needy student populations–those who are homeless.

Try to imagine the trauma of being homeless. You may be sleeping in a car or living in one temporary shelter after the next. Perhaps you simply do not know where you are going to sleep. If you are homeless, it would likely mean moving to strange cities or neighborhoods, not knowing your neighbors, and losing track of friends and family. It would mean becoming rootless and, if you were school age, explaining to classmates why they can't come over to your house to play.

Homelessness is a tragic and paradoxical phenomenon in the United States–poverty and pain in the land of plenty (Stronge, 1992). The American economy is stable with low inflation rates, sinking interest rates on loans, and unemployment at less than five percent; however, amid these signals of prosperity, thousands of children remain in poverty situations (Bryan & Lawler, 1998). The most recent estimate of homeless children and youth by the U.S. Department of Education (1995) is 744,000. The American homeless population is composed of more children than ever before, and the numbers are growing; indeed, families with children represent the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population. They constitute approximately 40 percent of the people who are homeless and more than three-fourths of these are composed of single-parent families headed by women (Bassuk & Rosenberg, 1988; Nunez, 1995). Unfortunately, indicators point to a continuation of this troubling trend. Since 1991, the number of homeless children and youth reported by the U.S. Department of Education has more than doubled (LeTendre, 1995), and according to a 1997 status report by Waxman and Turpin, requests for emergency shelter by families with children have increased and are expected to continue to escalate.

For decades, the poor and homeless have been analyzed through statistical data, and although the statistics are numbing, indeed, we must not forget that the numbers are a reflection of real children and youth with real feelings, needs, hopes, and dreams. Undereducation, underemployment, poverty, domestic violence, and substance abuse are among the corrosive elements that often embody the homeless experience. These subversive circumstances challenge the collective spirit of all of us, while the devastating effects on children and adolescents present a formidable challenge to the educational system. We need to create and maintain opportunities for proper school placement, access to support services, and attempts to address the social-emotional well-being of these students (Stronge, 1993a).

Breaking Through the Barriers

All children have the right to be included, accepted, supported, and enabled to participate in society through access to successful school experiences. No population is more at risk of school failure, and often outright school exclusion, than homeless children (Stronge, 1993b). These children and youth are often relegated to insignificant societal and educational status due to the mere circumstances of their birth. A number of perilous obstacles stand in the way of educational services for homeless students, not only to access but also to success in school once they have entered the system. Persistent and potentially damaging barriers to educational opportunities for homeless students include the lack of (a) awareness of issues and concerns surrounding homeless students and families, (b) parental involvement and support, (c) early intervention, and (d) effective coordination of service delivery. These areas denote challenges that must be addressed if we are to clear the path that leads to appropriate educational opportunities, dignity, acceptance, and societal participation.

Awareness

A problem that underlies many of the barriers to homeless education efforts is the lack of understanding and sensitivity to the needs of homeless students. The homeless are not one undifferentiated mass; rather, children and their families are homeless for different reasons (McChesney, 1993). The spectrum of homelessness ranges from families who are first-time homeless and are only temporarily in this condition to others who are chronically homeless (Stronge, 1993a).

The lack of awareness of the problems posed by homelessness should be addressed among school personnel through sensitivity and awareness training (Rafferty, 1995). Professional development activities focusing on homeless issues conducted at the state and local levels can be effective in teaching educators and other school personnel specific strategies to meet the needs of homeless students. Workshops that provide educators with the knowledge of the effects of frequent relocation and on the attitudes and learning of children are important tools in raising awareness (Hightower, Nathanson, & Wimberly, 1997). In addition, dissemination of information related to available community resources, exploration of specific instructional strategies and methods of adapting curriculum, and training in crisis management are important elements in providing effective professional development related to homelessness.

Awareness-raising activities that target school personnel are essential to avoid further isolation of homeless students and to promote specific strategies to meet their needs; however, raising the consciousness of members of the school staff is not enough. Community members also must be educated to increase the capacity of the system to respond to the needs of homeless students. Gaining the support of the community at large requires an understanding of the condition of homelessness, its underlying causes, and the needs of those affected (Hightower et al., 1997). Strategies to raise awareness that have been employed in many states and school districts include appointment of liaisons at the local levels, staff development, and face-to-face meetings with key constituents (Anderson, Janger, & Panton, 1995).

The most beneficial approaches to addressing the awareness issues of homelessness include multifaceted, comprehensive efforts that integrate the local community. State and local liaisons can promote causes related to homeless children and youth and build support for their programs and efforts by presenting information on the needs and goals in public forums sponsored by various education and social services-related organizations (Hightower et al., 1997). Community involvement and support also can be stimulated by raising awareness of civic groups, religious organizations, and local businesses to the needs of homeless children and youth.

Raising the awareness of teachers, administrators, and others and equipping them with an understanding of homelessness and its effects on the personal and instructional needs of homeless students is an important first step in planning and providing ef-

fective educational services. Provision of information and training designed to increase sensitivity of school personnel and the community makes an important contribution toward eliminating obstacles that separate homeless children and youth from equitable educational opportunities.

Parental Involvement

Another issue that is essential to the educational success of students who are homeless is parental involvement. A supportive climate for homeless children cannot be adequately provided without help from parents (Gonzalez, 1992). Family members play a fundamental role that supports the development of their children through modeling behavior, teaching competency, and facing challenges (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1998). Thus, an educational partnership with parents needs to be forged to assist students in accessing and succeeding in the educational enterprise.

According to Buckner, Bassuk, and Zima (1993), family dysfunction and stress related to the condition of homelessness act as barriers to healthy child development and to parental participation in the education of their children. A challenge in achieving partnerships with families lies in the fact that many homeless parents do not (or seemingly cannot) place an appropriate emphasis on the education of their children. Due to the dire situation of homelessness, parents may be so consumed with the task of daily survival that they lack the stamina to seek opportunities beyond meeting the most basic of needs.

Although homeless families are typically lacking in components of family strength, they are not necessarily lacking in concern and aspirations for their children. Homeless families are often uninformed regarding the rights of their awareness on homeless issues to include families so they can make informed decisions about the education of their children.

Desperate circumstances that consume families with the tasks of daily survival beg the urgent need for assistance and encouragement so that those parents may have the opportunity to become partners in the education of their children. Such assistance and awareness-raising activities that educate families of homeless children and youth as to legal rights and resources available to them should be offered within the context of a nurturing climate. This support can be created by positive and consistent communication with parents and the provision of training efforts to address parenting skills and information on available community services (Gonzalez, 1992).

Early Intervention

Programs that begin the educational process early are principal antecedents for success in learning for children, especially those from impoverished backgrounds (Maughan, 1988). Young homeless children have little stability in their lives and lack the nurture, nutrition, and health supports necessary for sound development. Frequent language, cognitive, and behavioral problems are directly related to homelessness during a child's formative years (Eddowes, 1992; Yamaguchi, Strawser, & Higgins, 1997).

Loss of access to medical care, hunger, and lack of school attendance lead to significant health issues, as well as developmental, psychological, and social growth issues. The importance of a warm, structured, capacity-building environment (such as in a preschool program) reduces stress, creates opportunities, and promotes educational and personal competence (Werner & Smith, 1992; Yamaguchi et al., 1997).

The lack of enrollment of homeless children in preschool programs presents an obvious obstacle to educational success. Although the importance of early educational intervention to success in learning for homeless children is clear, program access is so often limited. The problem of inadequate space in preschool programs is compounded by the fact that homeless children who are moving in and out of a community are not in line for open slots in existing programs. Thus, one practical solution associated with providing adequate preschool education programs for homeless children is to hold a few slots open that can be filled by those who are transient.

Other suggestions to influence early intervention for homeless children offered by Eddowes (1992) and Kling, Dunn, and Oakley (1996) include maintaining a trained staff with relatively stable schedules to ensure consistency for students. In addi-

tion to consistency, school personnel working with young homeless children should offer opportunities to foster individualized relationships that are built on trust, care, and dignity. High-quality, stable programs are essential to successful intervention for homeless preschool children and should be developed and staffed with trained personnel to provide both the basic and personal needs of children.

Coordinating Services

Another potential barrier to educating homeless children and adolescents is related to fragmented and disjointed agency efforts in addressing educational and personal concerns. Although education is essential to break the grip of poverty, schools alone cannot begin to solve the problems of homelessness (Stronge, 1993a). The broader community should be involved in solutions to the multidimensional problems of homelessness through effective state and local interagency partnerships. Such cooperation and coordination can enable service providers to share and stretch their resources to better serve homeless children and youth (Anderson et al., 1995).

Coordinated activities between different agencies and institutions can be complex as different organizations with inconsistent missions, requirements, and funding structures attempt to work together. Bureaucratic entanglements can inhibit effective planning if individuals with responsibility for providing educational opportunities for students do not take the time to become familiar with the roles and requirements of other agencies and organizations that may be in a position to help. Strong interagency partnerships are built on effective collaboration and a sharing of resources and information to support common activities that will impact educational services for homeless children and adolescents.

Suggestions to overcome barriers to more effectively shape interagency partnerships include developing goals, providing quality leadership, establishing cooperative policies, and pooling funds (Yon, Mickelson, & Carlton-LaNey, 1993). Responsible agencies need to build on their collective vision, commitment, and competence to create a synergy that will serve to establish and maintain solid partnerships to effectively support homeless students in educational endeavors.

Comprehensive community initiatives encompass a variety of programs and approaches that are designed to strengthen the community's ability to provide services and improve the lives of impoverished children and their families (Stagner & Duran, 1997). Interagency approaches at the local level operate under the assumption that the needs of poor families result from a variety of related issues rather than one single problem. Uniting services that respond to individual problems is a complex and challenging task requiring cooperation, flexibility, and shared accountability. Although data about the effectiveness of collaborative, multifaceted approaches that respond to the needs of people in poverty are scarce, evidence supports a measure of success in past comprehensive interagency initiatives. Efforts that are informed by past work most likely will contribute to even more promising future strategies and successes (Hightower et al., 1997; Stagner & Duran, 1997).

Federal Response to Homelessness

Access to education for homeless children has significantly improved as a result of programs funded through the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. First enacted in 1987, the McKinney Act was America's first comprehensive emergency aid program for homeless individuals. State education agencies are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that homeless students have access to a free, appropriate public education. The educational portion of the Act has been amended and strengthened in recent years, with the most recent amendment allowing states to incorporate the McKinney Act into consolidated state plans. The consolidated plans can provide homeless students with greater access to such programs as Title I and other compensatory education through cross-

program coordination and planning. The Act requires that each state ensure coordination among agencies such as the state department of education, local school districts, and other public agencies in their efforts to serve homeless individuals (Improving America's Schools Act, 1994).

Specific activities described by the McKinney Act that are intended to address the barriers to educational access and success include not only the coordination of comprehensive services, but also activities designed to address awareness issues among professionals, provisions to facilitate specialized educational services, and emergency assistance. Additionally, efforts to assist in providing tutoring, transportation, and school supplies are fundamental to increased access and success in school.

Summary

The concerted efforts of Congress, state education agencies, local school districts, shelter providers, and many other public and private agencies to assist homeless students and their families are beginning to yield dividends. Changes in state residency requirements have removed obstacles and served to increase accessibility to schools. Policies that allow exemption of homeless students from selected school admission requirements are a tangible step in the right direction.

Although progress in educating homeless students has been made in recent years, it has been undeniably slow and intermittent. There are fewer lawsuits required to secure enrollment of homeless students, fewer denials of access to public schools, and funding for education through the McKinney Act, though meager, is intact (Stronge, 1997). Barriers to educational opportunities for homeless children and youth, however, continue to adversely affect their ability to participate in and derive benefit from public education (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998).

Homelessness in America among school-age children and youth is not disappearing; to the contrary, it has increased with alarming speed. The changing composition of the homeless population that includes growing numbers of children and youth has direct implications for preparing teachers, agencies, and communities to work together to strengthen the educational safety net that will prepare children to break the cycle of poverty. As individuals and as a community, our humanity will be measured against how we have treated those at the margins of our society (Mother Teresa, 1989). As educators, we need to consider the dilemma that is before us, review and influence the revision of policies, and commit a concerted effort to this worthy cause. With compassion and care, we can help homeless students discover the dignity that is theirs through the opportunities for success in school and in life.

"Educating Homeless Children and Youth with Dignity and Care"

Appendix A

Activities to Aid in the Provision of Homeless Education (as described in the McKinney Act, 1987)

Educational services—such as tutoring, before- and after-school programs, developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, expedited evaluations, and education and training programs for parents

Professional development—designed to raise awareness among educators and others

Coordination of services—provided by schools and other agencies

Comprehensive services—such as referrals for medical, dental, mental, and other health services; counseling; and programs to address the particular needs arising from domestic violence

Transportation—to pay for excess cost of transporting homeless students to school

School records—to pay costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records

School supplies—to provide supplies for nonschool facilities and provide school supplies

Extraordinary or emergency assistance—to be provided as necessary to enroll and retain homeless students in school

"Educating Homeless Children and Youth with Dignity and Care"

Appendix B

Selected Agencies That Provide Services Related to the Education of Homeless Students

Better Homes Foundation
181 Wells Avenue
Newton Center, MA 02159-3320
(617) 964-3834

The Better Homes Foundation provides grants to programs that focus on trying to find innovative ways of helping families to secure permanent housing rather than simply providing emergency shelter and food. The foundation also provides assistance to children whose living situations have led to developmental delays and behavioral, emotional, or learning problems. The foundation publishes a free quarterly newsletter, *Helping Homeless Families.*

National Coalition for the Homeless
1012 Fourteenth Street, NW #600
Washington, DC 20005-3410
(202) 737-6444
nch@ari.net

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is a national advocacy network of service providers, homeless persons, activists, and others committed to ending homelessness through public education, public advocacy, grassroots organizing, and technical assistance. The NCH web page (http://nch.ari.net) contains an online library that maintains a searchable bibliographic database with references to research homelessness, housing, and poverty. It also contains six directories that list contact people, e-mail addresses, and web pages for hundreds of local, statewide, and national organizations.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
918 F Street NW, Suite 412
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 638-2535

The National Law Center was established in 1989 to advocate for solutions to homelessness. It is committed to creating solutions that address the causes of homelessness, not just its symptoms. The Law Center employs three main strategies to accomplish this end: litigation, legislation, and public education. It publishes a monthly newsletter, *In Just Times,* which provides up-to-date information on legal and policy issues affecting homeless people.

U.S. Conference of Mayors
Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness
1620 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-4005
(202) 293-7330

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Over the years, the Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness has authorized numerous reports on hunger, homelessness, and poverty in cities. The reports have documented the causes and magnitude of the problems, how cities were responding to them, and what national response was required. The task force continues to issue semiannual reports and monitors legislation and regulations.

U.S. Department of Education
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
600 Independence Ave. SW (4400-Portals)
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 260-0991

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth State and Local Grants Program provides formula grants to state and territory education agencies to enable them to prepare and carry out state plans for the education of children and youth and to support programs designed to address the barriers to educating homeless children.

U.S. Department of Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Adult Education for the Homeless Program
600 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 205-5499

The Adult Education for the Homeless Program provides grants to states and territories in support of educational programs for homeless adults. These programs are usually part of integrated packages of homeless support services developed through cooperative relationships with other public and private agencies and include systematic outreach services.

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Providing Educational Services to Homeless Students: A Multifaceted Response to a Complex Problem

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Homelessness is an overwhelming problem, especially if you are a child or adolescent disconnected from all that is familiar, stable, reassuring, and safe. Food, clothing, shelter, and security are daily struggles. What is our role as educators to help homeless students, and how can we possibly meet the myriad of needs they present? In a recent position paper by the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1997), the challenge was stated as this:

> When looking at the issue of homelessness from the perspective of education, there seems to be little that can be done to significantly impact the problem because the immediate solution will come only through the provision of adequate, affordable housing. Yet, if we fail to do what we can about educating homeless children, then, as a nation, we may forfeit our opportunity to make a dramatic difference in the lives of hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of children and youth. (p. 3)

Education in America historically has had the role of assimilating new immigrants, blurring class distinctions, and more recently, serving all children regardless of race or disability (Tyack, 1992). Extension of this basic educational opportunity to homeless students is a just and caring response, but it requires much more than the traditional, school-centered delivery model. It requires a broad-based and comprehensive approach that can only result from the collaborative efforts of various agencies working together at the local, state, and federal levels.

In the spring of 1995, the College of William and Mary was invited to assume responsibility for administration of the federal grant to Virginia for the education of homeless children and youth. The task was an overwhelming one because of the multiplicity and complexity of contributing factors for homelessness. Staff members recognized that the 15 local school homeless education programs across the state were serving only a small percentage of homeless students in the state and in a very limited way. Given limited resources but a commitment to improving the educational opportunities for as many homeless students as possible, the staff encouraged collaborative efforts at the local level and chose to direct their energies toward outreach and collaboration with key partners at the state level. It was their intention and sincere hope that by working more actively with other agencies to change policy and obtain additional resources, they could better support the local initiatives to assist homeless students. This article provides a framework for examining four levels of collaboration and, based on personal reflections of outreach efforts in Virginia, offers specific examples of how educational goals were pursued through collaboration at the state level and what was learned from those experiences.

Background

Although homeless children and youth are a relatively small percentage of the student population,

they arguably are one of its most vulnerable (Stronge, 1997). It is estimated that on any given night, at least 100,000 children are homeless (Stallings, 1995) and that over the course of a year, there are approximately 750,000 homeless school-age children (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Children and youth are estimated to constitute 26 percent to 33 percent of the homeless population (Nunez, 1995). Despite the fundamental commonality of no home, homeless children and youth are a heterogeneous group. They find themselves homeless due to a widely varying combination of factors that have differential effects on their educational needs (Stronge, 1995). Precipitating factors may include those related to the economy (that is, unemployment, underemployment), government policies and legislation (that is, social welfare policy, low-cost housing), the community (that is, housing market, health care system), individual problems (that is, domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse), and even the ravages of nature (that is, tornadoes, hurricanes).

As a consequence of these circumstances, many children and youth experience extreme poverty with attending health, nutrition, and safety problems (Nunez, 1995). The impact of homelessness on children manifests itself in their psychosocial development and academic achievement. Homeless preschoolers are much more likely to be developmentally delayed in areas such as language, attention span, sleep patterns, social interaction, and aggressiveness (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997). School-aged homeless children score lower on standardized tests, are referred more often for special education, and more frequently repeat a grade (Rafferty, 1997; Stronge, 1995).

The nature of issues that contribute to homelessness force a shift in focus from the child to the whole family, which is a difficult challenge for schools in working with homeless students. Even if school enrollment is achieved, which historically has been a major barrier to education for homeless students (Stronge, 1995), it is unlikely that the child will be able to attend class regularly and begin learning right away. There are a myriad of associated issues such as proper immunizations, clothes, school supplies, transportation, and academic support to offset gaps in previous school attendance that impede academic success (Virginia Commission on Youth, 1988). When parents are "exhausted from trying to supply the daily necessities of food, clothing, and shelter" (Mickelson, Yon, & Carlton-LaNey, 1995, p. 357), these routine school requirements take on formidable proportions. Without a broader, more coordinated effort to assist with the provision of these materials and services, the provision of "a free, appropriate public education" (Sec. 721[1]) to homeless students as mandated by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (1987) is meaningless.

A multifaceted response is required to address this multiplicity of problems (Kirst & Kelley, 1995; Mickelson et al., 1995). Given limited or nonexistent funding, such a response requires creativity in procuring school supplies, used clothing, bus tickets, and health care. Places of worship, civic organizations, retired teachers, businesses, and many others are often willing to help if someone will step forward to coordinate these efforts. Collaborative teams at any level, whether within the school, community, or state, have the greatest potential for success because of their ability to address the magnitude and diversity of the needs presented by homeless students.

The Nature of Collaboration

For the purposes of this article, collaboration is used to refer to all of the nontraditional efforts by individuals across agencies and institutions to work together on behalf of homeless children. They include "integration of education and human services, school-linked services, services integration, inter-professional collaboration, coordinated services for children, and family support" (Knapp, 1995, p. 5). Collaboration is necessary, in part, due to what Kirst and Kelley (1995) described as the "balkanized nature of the services that have emerged to administer assistance to children in need" (p. 23). Many public schools provide academic assistance to homeless students, but only a few programs provide comprehensive approaches to

education that incorporate family support services (Nunez & Collignon, 1997).

Although most schools have not conceptualized themselves as social agencies, it is an inevitable paradigm shift if the needs of the whole child are to be recognized and addressed (Cibulka & Kritek, 1996; Pawlas, 1996; Stallings, 1995). Yon, Mickelson, and Carlton-LaNey (1993) observed that "for over 100 years, reformers have advocated using schools as a base from which a number of social ills could be remedied by collaborations designed to meet the needs of at-risk students and their families" (p. 410).

Constructive learning does not occur when children are hungry, tired, frightened, or sick. The recent focus on the integration of education and human services (Dryfoos, 1998) is an acknowledgment that not all children come to school "ready to learn," and it is unrealistic to push for higher academic standards when these basic needs are not being met. For homeless students in particular, "the nature of services is likely to be more social support oriented and less academically oriented than traditional education services" Stronge, 1993, p. 355).

The difficulty is that "the creation of sufficiently comprehensive and responsive programs cannot be accomplished by one school or agency" (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997, p. 85); however, collaboration among community groups can link resources and services making possible comprehensive services that begin to meet the basic needs of the family, thereby enhancing the environmental stability and security for children. By meeting needs that threaten family survival, attention can be focused on other concerns such as school attendance. Model programs create "communities of learning" that include "specialized education for homeless children, contextualized education for parents, and linkages to needed services" (Nunez & Collignon, 1997, p. 57). "With other agencies, organizations and volunteers, educators create a meaningful network—a tapestry of programs" (Reed-Victor & Stronge, 1997, p. 87) for homeless children and their families.

Potential collaborative partners for meeting the needs of homeless children and youth are multiple, especially in urban areas. The appendix lists broad categories of potential team members. By working together, resources can be pooled and leveraged to achieve a more comprehensive response to the presenting problems of the child and family. For teams to be cohesive, it is important for them to focus their energies by

- Defining a common goal
- Collecting information on needs and resources
- Identifying priorities based on needs
- Developing a strategic plan

Working with others to achieve a common goal is the simple essence of collaboration. The ultimate goal is to connect homeless children and their families to services and programs more quickly so that they are responsive and amenable to school access and success.

Just as collaboration can occur at multiple organizational levels, the intensity of collaboration can vary depending on the level of involvement and integration of goals and resources. Figure 1 on the following page depicts a continuum of interagency relationships from one of coordination in which goals are similar, resources are discrete, and there is limited contact to a point of total collaboration in which there are common goals and shared resources. Four points along the continuum are labeled for the purposes of reference and are identified as levels one through four.

Level One

Level one interaction reflects the standing relationship that exists among various agencies that serve homeless individuals. There may be an awareness that programs exist, but there is no working knowledge of their capabilities or the individuals who run them. To enhance coordination and understanding of available resources within states, the Virginia Interagency Action Council for the Homeless and similar councils in other states and at the national level have been established. Strategies such as conferences, newsletters, and Web pages are used to disseminate information and extend the network of individuals and agencies that interact and learn

Figure 1
Collaborative Continuum

COORDINATION			TOTAL COLLABORATION
Level 1 similar goals/ discrete resources	Level 2 knowledge of/ referral for services	Level 3 provision of resources	Level 4 shared goals & resources

about available programs and services. As Holtzman (1995) noted, "the most creative initiatives for the near future will be those that grow out of local partnerships rather than federal mandates" (p. 60). Through the resulting information exchange and interaction, the level of collaboration is elevated from one of parallel or overlapping services for similar populations to one of awareness and the possibility of future cooperation around commonly agreed-on problems and goals.

Level Two

At level two, there is a deeper understanding and appreciation of what other programs and individuals can offer. The relationship that developed between the B. F. Day School, a public school in Seattle serving large numbers of homeless students, and the Mercer Island United Methodist Church is an example of the benefits of service coordination at this level. Quint (1994) described how volunteers from the church helped the students' families move into permanent housing, obtain household goods, and perform repairs. The church members and school staff were able to coordinate their efforts in such a way that a whole range of interconnected needs were met at the same time. By helping families, the church provided children with a safe, predictable place from which to go to school able to learn.

Level Three

The actual provision of resources (for example, donated materials, personnel, additional funding) by one organization or community partner to another agency characterizes level three collaboration. Examples of collaborative efforts such as these are heartwarming and encouraging because they demonstrate the depth of caring that exists in communities. Many school systems receiving McKinney homeless education grant monies have developed a range of relationships with community agencies on behalf of homeless students and their families to obtain housing, food, clothing, and school supplies. In addition, model programs have extended services to the temporary housing facilities in which families live. Ideally, "model [homeless] programs have combined the educational expertise of schools with the experience and services of shelters into school- and shelter-based communities of learning" (Nunez & Collignon, 1997, p. 57). Nunez and Collignon (1997) described the close working relationship between the Salem-Keizer Public School system in Oregon and five local family shelters. Staff members provide a bridge between the school and shelter by providing after-school and preschool enrichment programs, case management, and life-skills classes for parents. The shelters provide space, schools provide personnel, and local businesses provide materials; together, they are better able to address the needs of the whole child and whole family.

Level Four

Total collaboration with shared resources—level four collaboration—is difficult to achieve, but with the greater flexibility of state and federal grants, this is becoming more feasible for all programs. One remarkable example of a program that has approximated this level of collaboration is A Child's Place, a nonprofit organization that resides in a public school in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina. As a kindergarten through sixth-grade school serving homeless children, A Child's Place is "a joint effort

between the Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools, the community, and the private social service agencies in Charlotte" (Yon et al., 1993, p. 413). Although financial resources were not combined, they were coordinated and reconfigured to meet the specific needs of homeless children in this setting by board members with a fund-raising role. According to Yon et al. (1993), the collaborative process has been challenging, particularly in terms of defining a common vision and agreeing on the resulting use of resources, but the "outcomes for homeless children and their families have been, and continue to be, substantial" (p. 423). As Gray (1995) observed, "By marshaling the resources of the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, these partnerships afford synergistic solutions to problems that are impossible for any single organization or sector to solve through independent action" (p. 71).

Benefits of Collaboration

The actual benefits of collaboration go far beyond serving the specific needs of children and youth, the homeless, and those more fortunate. Working together with other agencies is a means of

- Building bridges of understanding
- Developing new perspectives
- Illuminating new options
- Providing new resources
- Stretching existing resources
- Creating a sense of community

When educators become members of groups with common concerns and goals, they are able to exert more influence on policymaking across agencies based on trust and an enhanced appreciation for the interdependent roles of each organization and agency.

A Case Study: Collaborative Efforts in Virginia

What follows is a description of state-level activities to improve services for homeless students and is followed by a discussion of the lessons learned from more than two years of the author's experience as the program administrator with the Virginia Homeless Education Program. The program, later renamed Project HOPE, was funded through a federal grant to the state Department of Education and originated in 1987 as Title VII, Subtitle B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The program was amended by the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Amendments of 1990 and more recently under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994.

The majority of the grant funding was and continues to be distributed to approximately 15 local programs in large and small school systems across the state that provide services to homeless students. Local program coordinators oversee the delivery of services that typically include supplemental tutoring, professional development of staff, medical referral services, transportation, early childhood education, counseling, school supplies, and parent education. The fundamental role of the state office for Project HOPE is one of coordination. According to the McKinney Act, our functions included the following:

1. Estimating the number of homeless children and youth served
2. Gathering information on the nature and extent of the problems experienced by homeless children and youth
3. Developing and executing a state plan
4. Preparing and submitting a report reflecting statewide information on items one and two above
5. Facilitating coordination among educational and social agencies

6. Developing relationships and coordinating among homeless service providers to "improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and youth and their families" (Sec. 722[f][6])

We focused our energies on the coordination role described in items five and six and directed our attention to a variety of collaborative activities with the local subgrantees, the Virginia Department of Education, and other state-level organizations serving homeless children and youth.

Building Community Within

The first order of business was to build a sense of community and collaboration among the 15 subgrantees who were facing similar issues and had much to offer each other in terms of support and guidance. The two conferences we sponsored in the first year for local program coordinators helped lay the groundwork for ongoing teamwork. After the first year, we held one workshop a year in tandem with the Virginia Association for Federal Program Administrators to provide a broader-based professional development experience. Project HOPE also provided funds for three local coordinators on a rotating basis to attend the annual conference of the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. These meetings afforded coordinators an opportunity to develop relationships with professionals serving children and youth across the state and country. The acquired knowledge and the extended professional network enhanced the collective capacity to resolve the difficult problems and dilemmas that arise on a daily basis in working with homeless students and their families.

Collaboration Within the Virginia Department of Education

Our efforts in collaborating with the state's Department of Education were facilitated by three key factors: the director of compensatory programs who was a strong ally and supporter of the effort, an explicit policy shift to "cross-program coordination" from the federal government, and expanding efforts in the department to collaborate. The director of compensatory programs was committed to having quality programs for homeless children and youth and integrating them into other federal programs such as Title I and Head Start. He made himself available on a regular basis to assist us in negotiating bureaucratic challenges. He also involved us as team members in meetings for federal programs in Richmond. His backing empowered Project HOPE to be an active participant in departmental undertakings such as conferences and the consolidated planning process.

The consolidated planning process reflected a federal policy shift and played a key role in fostering collaboration among federal programs at the Department of Education that benefited Project HOPE. As part of the Clinton administration's effort to "reinvent" government, the Department of Education had taken a number of steps to streamline its own bureaucracy, such as reducing the volume of regulations and simplifying the continuing grant application process (Abercrombie, 1998). Consolidated plans allowed multiple federal programs to work together to develop a grant application. Homeless education programs were funded under the Improving America's Schools Act (1994) and thus were eligible for inclusion in the new idea of consolidated state plans. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1995), consolidation was

> intended to improve teaching and learning by encouraging greater cross-program coordination, planning, and service delivery; enhance integration of programs with educational activities carried out with state and local funds; and promote the state's educational goals for all students while effectively meeting the needs of the programs' intended beneficiaries. (pp.4-5)

Guidance such as this from the federal government provided further support for the efforts of Project HOPE to gain access for homeless students to a variety of educational programs for at-risk students, such as Head Start and Title I.

Another arena in which Project HOPE had ongoing collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education was the Early Childhood Education Net-

work. The 1994 McKinney Act amendments encouraged the extension of program services to preschool homeless students. Often, the best preschool programming was available through Head Start or other preschool initiatives when we could access these programs for homeless children. The Early Childhood Education Network with specialists from Title I, special education, Head Start, Even Start, and migrant education provided direct access to individuals who made funding decisions and provided program guidance. By working with this group in an ongoing forum, Project HOPE was able to facilitate the extension of federal program services to homeless preschoolers.

Reaching Out to the Community of Homeless Service Providers

Involvement with other service providers at both the state and national level came easily given sufficient time and energy. At the national level, we worked most closely with the National Coalition for the Homeless, a useful conduit for legislative information, and the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, an important association of colleagues coordinating similar programs in other states. The annual conferences of the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth provided an opportunity to meet and develop relationships with seasoned state coordinators from across the country who provided invaluable assistance to our fledgling program in Virginia by sharing information and materials on program design, program evaluation, child estimate methodology, training materials, and much more. Our state program was enhanced through collaboration with others who had more experience and, in some cases, more resources due to the size of their state grants.

The most critical organization for our collaborative work with other agencies within the state was the Virginia Interagency Action Council for the Homeless (VIACH). VIACH is composed of representatives from state and federal agencies representing health, employment, mental health, education, social services, housing, and social security. In addition, there were representatives of advocacy groups, food banks, the faith community, and charities such as the Salvation Army and United Way. It is a group with varied backgrounds and disparate funding streams but similar goals of assisting the homeless in our various domains. VIACH gives the individual members a forum in which to share information and develop strategies to coordinate services. The annual conference, newsletter, and Web page serve to extend the members' forum to all interested parties across Virginia and beyond.

One small but striking example of the potential for such groups was demonstrated when the co-chairperson of VIACH, a program manager from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, invited Project HOPE to provide input on the new guidelines for placement of homeless families in temporary housing. One of our primary recommendations was that proximity to schools be a consideration in the designation of temporary housing for homeless families with children. It was a simple change that addressed a major issue identified by a national program evaluation (Anderson, Janger, & Panton, 1995). Yet, barriers such as these can be overcome as a natural outcome of enhanced communication and collaboration.

Collaboration at the Policy Level

As a result of Project HOPE's involvement in VIACH and at the Department of Education, we were invited to serve on two consecutive legislative workgroups, the first of which "examined the prevalence and needs of homeless children in the Commonwealth" (Virginia Commission on Youth and Virginia Housing Study Commission, 1997, p. 1) and the second, which extended the first study by "examining the *educational* needs of homeless children" (Virginia Commission on Youth, 1998, italics added). The first legislative workgroup began its study roughly one year after the College of William and Mary assumed responsibility for the homeless education grant, and Project HOPE staff viewed the legislative study as a critical opportunity to affect policy changes that were at the very heart of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.

Many of the workgroup members were active in VIACH and well informed on the causes and conse-

quences of homelessness; however, the focus on children was a new lens through which to view available services. The Virginia Coalition for the Homeless (1995) reported that in Virginia, 27 percent of the persons who received shelter were children, which is consistent with national figures (Virginia Commission on Youth and Virginia Housing Study Commission, 1997). In stark contrast, only 7.6 percent of the state and federal funds spent on the homeless in Virginia were targeted for children (Virginia Commission and Youth and Virginia Housing Study Commission, 1997). The majority of funding was targeted for food and shelter that are essential, but children's programs such as structured daycare, educational services, and outreach for runaway youth were being neglected.

After six months of work, 29 recommendations were made in seven areas, one of which addressed educational needs. The 1997 Virginia General Assembly was extremely supportive of the Needs of Homeless Children Study and took action on nine recommendations. Project HOPE staff had testified on behalf of the education-related recommendations and encouraged careful consideration of the study in general. The following were the key recommendations that the general assembly and Project HOPE had supported:

1. Allotting $360,000 for child coordinators in homeless and domestic violence shelters

2. Amendment of the Virginia Code to clarify that children residing in homeless and domestic violence shelters are entitled to free education from the local school district

3. Continuation of the study on the needs of homeless children, with a specific focus on educational concerns

These actions were significant for local collaboration efforts. Item 1 funded positions for people in local shelters to coordinate social services and education, and Item 2 lowered the barrier for enrollment of students from homeless shelters. We were very pleased with the results and were hopeful that a second study focusing specifically on educational issues would provide a further opportunity to advocate for other initiatives.

In the spring of 1997, another legislative workgroup composed primarily of educators and child/youth service providers began the *Study of the Educational Needs of Homeless Children* (Virginia Commission on Youth, 1988). Findings documented the need for daycare, after-school services, and more educational services for homeless children. In addition, problems in the coordination of social services and access to education were identified as barriers to a more comprehensive approach to homelessness. Eight recommendations were made by the workgroup, three of which were education-related.

1. Inclusion of homelessness as a risk factor in existing Department of Education at-risk initiatives

2. Dissemination of training materials (on the needs of homeless students) to all local school divisions

3. Provision of state funding to support the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Education Program

The General Assembly was less supportive of this study's recommendations and took action only on the first recommendation. The months of effort and collaboration did not result in any new funding despite a robust state budget. Kirst and Kelley (1995) noted that legislative committees on children have become common across the country as the "integration of services has gained political support" (p. 32), but they often do not have the necessary influence to make substantial changes in the delivery and funding of services for children.

The first recommendation, inclusion of homelessness as a risk factor for Department of Education initiatives, did provide Project HOPE with formal, policy-level recognition that enhanced the informal, personal connections we had made with various program areas. Homelessness was now considered a risk factor for a child's educational experience.

Lessons Learned

We learned a great deal during the first two-and-a-half years of administrating the McKinney Homeless Education grant, especially given the timing of legislative attention to homeless children. Not only did we learn about the personal tragedies and triumphs of homeless students and their families, but we came to understand the bureaucratic challenges of being responsive to clients with multifaceted needs in terms of direct services and legislative efforts to enhance supportive policy. We developed a healthy respect for the limitations of good intentions and a recognition of the possibilities of collective, collaborative action.

Collective Caring

It is the fundamental ethic of caring by individuals that collectively can change lives (Beck, Kratzer, & Isken, 1997; Noddings, 1984). Take, for example, the story told by Stacy Hawkins Adams (1997) in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* about a mother of an elementary-aged son who, as she was recovering from a pituitary tumor, was forced out of a house she and her extended family members were renting. The mother found herself not only unemployed but homeless. When she shared these events with her son's principal, he referred her to St. Joseph's Villa that provides housing for homeless women and their children for up to two years. After 18 months of support and training, the mother was able to get a job, buy a used car for transportation, and rent an apartment of her own. A helping hand such as the one extended by this principal changed the course of one family's life and undoubtedly had a dramatic effect on a little boy's educational success. Stronge (1995) captured this spirit with the following statement: "We can help, first, by caring individually and, second, by joining our efforts collectively in providing an appropriate educational opportunity for homeless students" (p. 137).

Networking as an Essential First Step

One of the strongest messages common to all of the literature on homeless education is the importance of collaboration with the goal of integrated services. Networking with potential collaborative partners is an important first step in learning about available community resources. No matter how well-intentioned federal and state policy may be regarding coordination, it takes people developing trusting relationships with one another to foster meaningful collaboration. It is through the understanding of respective capacities and the development of mutual goals that agencies can work together on behalf of children. Ultimately, over time, working relationships and voluntary cooperation among agencies can evolve into institutional changes and better ways of doing business together.

Enlightened Administrative Roles and Practices

One of the major barriers to establishing effectively integrated services for children identified by Sullivan and Sugarman (1996) was administrative practices that preserve the status quo and do not adjust to changing circumstances. Project HOPE was fortunate in this regard because its administration was new and had the explicit expectation of changing the status quo. Many of the efforts undertaken by Project HOPE reflect the recommendations made by Sullivan and Sugarman (19960 for modernizing the administration of services. These changes included (a) unified systems for planning (for example, consolidated planning), (b) client-friendly transitions from program to program (for example, role of local coordinators), (c) joint program-supportive activities with cost sharing, and (d) a shift from a top-down, compliance approach to a flexible, community-responsive orientation. Although compliance is a real issue when administering a federal grant, there is often some latitude for judgment, and well-reasoned, child-centered decisions generally are defensible.

Supportive Public Policy

Multiple pieces of recent federal legislation have recognized the "importance of health, nutrition, and social services to student achievement" (Sullivan & Sugarman, 1996, p. 287) and, as a result, have supported school-linked integrated services. Examples include the Improving America's Schools Act (1994) that reauthorized the educational portion of the McKinney Act, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1996), and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1996). Title I of the ESEA specifically addresses children in high-

poverty schools and the need for coordinated services to meet their many needs. This policy focus is being adopted at the local level and Title I programs in Virginia provide much of the additional support available for homeless students in school systems that do not have McKinney homeless education programs.

Public policy may encourage and legitimize certain activities, such as coordination, but it provides no guarantee that they will occur. As observed by Sullivan and Sugarman (1996), "federal and state law is replete with injunctions to coordinate programs, yet few agencies and programs do so" (p. 286). Fortunately, Virginia, like most states, is encouraging more comprehensive human service programs and allowing greater flexibility in using federal funds to deliver services. Project HOPE has witnessed this shift in thinking through the consolidated planning process that encourages participants to think beyond their own programs and consider the needs of all children. The consolidated planning process was extended to local school divisions as an option in lieu of categorical funding plans (for example, Title I, Head Start).

A second major policy thrust has been that the federal government has devolved authority to the states for program design and permitted more flexibility in the use of funding streams with block grants, for example. Sullivan and Sugarman (1996) predicted that a likely outcome will be that states "devolve much of their authority to counties or other regional or local jurisdictions" (p. 292). This change has the potential to effect the kinds of changes recommended by the national evaluation of the McKinney education program, to "enable school districts and service providers to stretch their available resources and thus be able to better serve homeless children and youth" (Anderson et al., 1995, p. 36).

Evaluation of Collaborative Services

Knapp (1995) offered an in-depth discussion of the issues confronting evaluators and researchers in the area of collaborative services for children and families and suggested a number of methodological approaches to address the identified issues. Project HOPE both recognized the need for program evaluation and learned firsthand of its challenges. Program evaluation was important to (a) assess effectiveness of local subgrant programs, (b) document progress for the Virginia Department of Education, (c) advocate for needs with the legislature, (d) develop public awareness of the problems and the successes, and (e) comply with the requirement for a count by the Stewart B. McKinney Act. During 1996 and 1997, we collected data from local educational programs on the access to and use of various services by homeless children and youth. In addition, we collected similar information from homeless and domestic violence shelters to compare numbers and perspectives.

Although we developed an important baseline on the number of homeless children and youth, their needs, and the barriers they encounter in receiving an education, there were many concerns. Most important was the lack of data on the impact of services on the academic success of children and youth. Given the nature of homelessness, longitudinal studies of services provided to students and their ultimate effect are nonexistent and beyond the grasp of our current data-gathering strategies (Stronge, 1997). For these reasons and more, program evaluation in the field of homeless education has been hampered by many of the issues delineated by Knapp (1995) and has struggled to meet the challenges of effective program evaluation. Without information on program efficacy, it may become difficult to maintain or increase public support for educational services for homeless students.

Satisfaction with Small Victories

Homeless children and youth present a complex set of problems requiring multifaceted responses. Successes tend to be small and tenuous, but we must savor and build incrementally on them. Project HOPE's experience with the legislative process was frustrating because we were unable to obtain state funding to sponsor more local programs that we knew were important in coordinating services between schools and communities. But in retrospect, we achieved a great deal in procuring funds for shelter-based child and youth coordinators. With effective outreach and receptivity by area schools,

the shelter-based coordinators will be able to enhance school access and success much like our local school-based coordinators.

Final Thoughts: A Call for Human Kindness

Schools may be "the only source of stability in the life of a homeless child" (Rafferty, 1997, p. 50). As educators, we have the power to mitigate the effects of homelessness with our understanding and compassion. We can provide a successful educational experience and a chance to break the cycle of poverty, but schools cannot do it alone. It requires supportive communities with a range of necessary services and concerned individuals to negotiate the boundaries of educational, medical, housing, and social service agencies on behalf of homeless children and their families. With the trends toward noncategorical funding of programs and an emphasis on coordination, schools have a better opportunity than ever before to make a difference for our most vulnerable students.

Successful school programs for homeless children are characterized by communication and collaboration, and "yet, this critical step...is the piece most often missing" from most school efforts (Nunez & Collignon, 1997, p. 59). Communication and collaboration take time and effort, but the more we promote them and support educators who are willing to take the challenge of meeting the physical, emotional, and educational needs of children through collaboration with other professionals, the more humane and responsive schools will be for all children, including those who are homeless.

Appendix to this Article

Possible Collaborative Partners

Social services
Domestic violence shelters
Emergency shelters
Business community
Social clubs/organizations
Civic organizations
Health care providers/health departments
Community services board
Emergency food network/food banks
Faith community
Salvation Army
Rescue missions
Mental health clinics
Employment services
Job training programs

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Improving Educational Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Who Are Homeless

Walther-Thomas, Christine; Korinek, Lori; McLaughlin, Virginia Laycock; & Williams, Brenda Toller (Summer 1996). "Improving Educational Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Who Are Homeless." *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 2 (2), 57-75. Reprinted with permission.

Students who are homeless constitute a unique subset within today's school population; those who also have disabilities face even greater challenges. This article highlights the unique needs of students with disabilities who are homeless, legislative mandates for serving these students (the McKinney Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and promising practices for overcoming educational and institutional obstacles to service delivery. Suggestions will focus on developing collaborative relationships at multiple levels, creating responsive systems through staff development and procedural revisions, and providing students with the social and instructional support they need to be successful.

Today's educators are faced with a myriad of student-related issues, which require a broader base of knowledge and administrative skill to resolve. The growing population of students who are "exceptional" or "at risk" for school failure due to numerous factors presents unique challenges to district- and building-level administrators (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1995), as well as teachers and related service professionals.

Most recently, national attention has focused on the increasing number of children and youth who require specialized educational services because of homelessness. There is no one figure that is widely accepted as representing the number of individuals who are homeless. Recent estimates have ranged from 200,000-350,000 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to three million by the National Coalition for the Homeless (1990). A study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (Waxman and Reyes, 1990) indicated that approximately 20 percent of those who are homeless are children; fewer than half attend school. Although there are no current and reliable estimates of the number of students who are homeless who qualify for special education, Bassuk (1985) reported that 29 percent of the students she sampled had been in special education.

Students who are homeless manifest a wide range of emotional, social, and academic difficulties commonly seen in students qualifying for special education, including depression, aggression, regression, low frustration tolerance, inattentiveness, poor achievement, low self-esteem, and language and cognitive delays (Anderson, Janger, and Panton, 1995; Bassuk, 1985; Grant, 1990; Heflin and Rudy, 1991). While many of these problems may be predictable reactions to homelessness, disabilities are to be expected among students who are homeless, just as they exist among children and youth in general. Homelessness compounds the challenges presented by disabilities. School-age individuals with disabilities who are homeless have a legal right to access special education services to meet their needs, and schools have a legal and moral obligation to help them. To do this effectively requires an expanded "continuum of care" that integrates school

programs with community services for students and their families (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1995).

The purpose of this article is to highlight the unique needs of students with disabilities who are homeless, legislative mandates for serving these students, and promising practices for overcoming obstacles to service delivery. These practices will focus on developing collaborative relationships at multiple levels, creating responsive systems, and providing students with the social and instructional support they need to be successful.

Legal Basis for Educating Homeless Children with Disabilities

McKinney Act. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77) of 1987 was the first federal legislation specifically to address the educational needs of children and youth who are homeless. Under this Act, individuals who are homeless are defined as those who lack a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence or who have a primary nighttime residence that is: (a) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for individuals with mental illness); (b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; (c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or (d) "doubled-up"—living with relatives or friends not designated as legal guardians of the child or youth. The McKinney Act and subsequent amendments mandate access to the same free, appropriate, public education for students who are homeless, consistent with the services provided to other children and youth who are residents of their respective school districts. These services include preschool programs, special education, compensatory education, programs for students with limited English proficiency, meal programs, before- and after-school care, extended school year opportunities, vocational education, and programs for students who are gifted and talented. The McKinney Act also states that homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

Funds related to the Homeless Assistance Act are appropriated primarily as grants through states to localities. To receive funding under the McKinney Act, states are obligated to establish an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. This office has responsibility for creating a comprehensive information base on the numbers of children and youth without homes in the state, specific problems encountered in accessing educational services, and progress achieved through programs to address these identified needs. It is also responsible for coordination of the development and implementation of a state plan that describes procedures for identification of children and youth who are homeless, assessment of their special needs, and assurance that they are given the opportunity to meet the same challenging state performance standards all students are expected to meet. The state plan must address policies to remove obstacles to the education of students without homes. Barriers specifically cited in the 1990 amendments include those related to transportation, residency, immunization, records, and guardianship.

Local initiatives covered by the Act include (a) program development, implementation, and demonstrated excellence in removing barriers to education; (b) family, professional, and service provider education on the rights and needs of children and youth without homes; and (c) provision of direct support services to students. Interagency support for these children and youth must be coordinated by local education agencies.

Despite the improvements and increased resources included in the amendments, the McKinney Act has been only minimally successful in advocating for students who are homeless (Heflin and Rudy, 1991; Strong and Helm, 1990). Participation in the McKinney Act programs is voluntary; federal funding is awarded based on a plan submitted by a state or territory rather than demonstrated implementation; and there are no consequences for noncompliance. Funding appropriated to implement McKinney in 1987-88 ($4.6 and $4.8 million, respectively) amounted to less than ten dollars per

year for every student who is homeless in America (National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 1990). While funds were increased to $7.2 million in 1990, financial support for the Act is far from adequate and is likely being spent for services already being provided and funded through other programs (Helm, 1993). Follow-up studies (First and Cooper, 1991; Friedman and Christiansen, 1990) have shown that significant numbers of students without homes are still excluded from school on the basis of residency and guardian requirements, although the law clearly calls for removal of these barriers. Even if these students gain access to education, their success in school is often limited by in-school barriers such as inappropriate placement, lack of support services, and inattention to their social and emotional well-being (Stronge, 1993).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

As previously noted, organizational procedures typically followed in schools often delay or deny educational services to students without homes. Children and youth with disabling conditions who are homeless constitute a unique and even more challenging subpopulation with special needs. The McKinney Act mandates educational services for students in general with special education as one possible service. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) guarantees students with disabilities, including those who are homeless, the right to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Many students who are homeless manifest learning, behavioral, and health disabilities that would legitimately qualify them for special education (Bassuk and Rosenberg, 1990; Heflin and Rudy, 1991; Rescoria, Parker, and Stolley, 1991), yet accessing special education and related services (for example, counseling, occupational and physical therapy, speech) presents additional challenges beyond getting students to school. The most prevalent disabling conditions among school-aged populations are learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). The behaviors indicative of these disabilities are often similar to those demonstrated by students who are homeless. Distinguishing the effects of homelessness from those of a disabling condition is difficult. Many legal disability definitions contain criteria (for example, persistent over time; not due to environmental, economic, or adaptive behavior deficits) that make it difficult for transient students to qualify for services under these categories. While common reactions to homelessness should not automatically be deemed to be the results of disabling conditions (Grant, 1990; Stronge and Tenhouse, 1990), certainly the circumstances of homelessness exacerbate negative effects of disabilities. For these students, there is an increased need for special education in order for them to be successful both in and out of school, yet their homelessness may interfere with accurate diagnosis.

Promising Practices

To overcome typical barriers and meet the educational needs of students who are homeless, several different models for service delivery have emerged in recent years. Prior to the McKinney Act, the few programs that existed tended to be transitional programs at nontraditional sites (for example, located next to a shelter for families) designed to provide immediate but temporary academic, social, and support services (Stronge, 1992). More recent approaches emphasize the education of students who are homeless within existing schools. As noted above, this preference for educating students in mainstream school environments to reduce isolation and stigmatization has been articulated in the McKinney Act. The move to serve students with disabilities in more inclusive settings has also impacted the provision of special education services where there has been a parallel mandate for education in the least restrictive environment since 1975. As a result, students who are homeless, including those who have identified disabilities, are likely to be served in general education programs. Many of the support structures and practices already in place in effective schools enable educators to respond quickly and appropriately to the special needs of these students. Programs that are characterized by strong collaborative relationships, responsive administrative systems, and effective provision of

instructional and social support are best positioned to serve students who are homeless.

Developing Collaborative Relationships

Students who are homeless present a complex array of needs that can challenge even the most experienced professionals. Trying to tackle the problems single-handedly is a formula for frustration and failure. Schools that openly embrace an ethic of care and shared responsibility for all students are best able to serve them effectively. When families, teachers, and service providers work together as a team, students have the benefit of more creative and coherent programs. Collaborative relationships are also critical in providing a network of support to help both families and professionals persist in their efforts when the odds seem overwhelming. For collaboration to yield positive results, however, it cannot be viewed as simply an "add-on" responsibility. Professionals need adequate preparation, ongoing support, and designated time to work with others collaboratively to accomplish desired improvements in service delivery.

Collaboration With Families. Family involvement in the educational process is particularly critical for students who are homeless. Professionals need to recognize the grave concerns that families have at this time. Basic survival demands often preclude their significant involvement with schools, and lack of participation should not be interpreted as lack of interest. Professionals must also respect cultural and economic differences that influence expectations and daily experiences of students and families. Insensitivity by teachers or administrators intensifies feelings of isolation and may alienate parents or guardians when the schools most need their active involvement. When families feel valued and respected and perceive the schools as truly committed to serving their children, they are more likely to participate in educational programs.

Scheduling meetings at times and places more convenient to families may also enhance participation. A novel example is to arrange for a family conference at a neighborhood fast-food restaurant with an adjacent play area for young children. Meals might be provided through PTA funds or donations from local restaurateurs. Providing transportation and having knowledgeable volunteers attend initial school meetings with parents to increase their comfort level and help them translate information, complete required forms, and/or ask questions may also increase family involvement. Some schools increase family participation in these meetings by providing essential items such as clothing, personal toiletries, or school supplies to those who attend.

Family members and guardians are important sources of information about their child's functioning and the educational programs experienced in other settings. When students have identified disabilities, families may have copies of evaluation reports and Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Even when these documents are not available, families may provide names of teachers or other contact persons who can expedite the transfer of records and communicate information to the receiving program. Viewing families as partners in the educational process requires focusing on their unique strengths and coping resources. The goal is to empower families to develop their own skills in order to negotiate educational and community systems more effectively (Dunst et al., 1993).

Collaboration Among School Professionals. Effective education for students who are homeless requires a high level of collaboration among the professionals who serve these students and their families (Korinek, Walther-Thomas, and Laycock, 1992; Stronge, 1992; Tower, 1992). Fortunately, many of the structures already in place to encourage collaborative planning and problem-solving can offer the continuum of support that is needed. Departmental or grade-level team meetings may provide an initial forum for discussion of special needs, classroom accommodations, and available resources. When teachers have concerns about particular students, they may seek assistance from a principal, supervisor, or appropriate specialist. Such consultation is likely to be most helpful if it is collaborative in nature, with both individuals sharing equally in the analysis of needs and the development of intervention plans.

Many schools now have assistance teams to support teachers in their work with students who have

academic or behavioral problems. Teachers may request assistance and then meet with the team of three-to-five peers to target specific intervention goals, brainstorm alternative strategies, and develop action plans to serve students more effectively. Teachers who work most directly with students remain the primary contacts and retain responsibility for follow-through action. This type of problem-solving enables teachers to respond to student needs quickly and on a personalized basis.

Another form of collaboration well suited to serving students who are homeless is team or co-teaching. Two teachers, most typically a general educator and a specialist, share responsibility for planning, delivering, and evaluating classroom instruction. This ongoing interaction affords teachers opportunities for early recognition of individual student needs, generation of creative ideas for instructional adaptations, delivery of more intensive and flexible lessons, and continuous monitoring of student performance (Walther-Thomas).

All of the collaborative opportunities described thus far are available within the general education program. If students have disabilities, additional supports may be accessed through the special education process. The teams of teachers, administrators, and specialists who work together for the child study process and the development of IEPs can provide more in-depth information about learner needs and offer more specific recommendations for program modifications.

Collaboration Within Communities. Basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, safety, health care, and employment are paramount for families who are homeless. Because schools and shelters tend to be central in the network of human service agencies providing assistance, they often exert leadership in promoting interagency collaboration. The challenge for education leaders is to initiate a forum for communication among community agencies (for example, social services, mental health) and non-profit organizations (for example, Salvation Army, Red Cross, church-sponsored shelters) who share responsibility to serve families who are homeless. Some shelter programs have in-house staff members who are designated as school liaisons. Liaisons can help ensure effective communication among families, schools, and agencies. These agencies can facilitate prompt student enrollment and can assist with the transfer of important school records. Unfortunately, some shelters, already burdened by enormous demands and limited staff, may be reluctant to participate in school identification and tracking programs. Schools should work with shelters to encourage cooperation and participation. For example, McKinney funds can be used to establish homework and reading areas within shelters that can offer student residents school supplies, books, educational games, and tutorial assistance.

Because shelter staff can provide valuable information about students and their families, it is essential for schools to develop effective mechanisms to facilitate shelter staff participation in the educational lives of student residents (Anderson et al., 1995). In addition to useful family data, informed shelter staff members can offer student residents ongoing encouragement about school activities and projects, promote regular attendance, and offer homework assistance. An example of effective school-agency collaboration occurred in Madison, Wisconsin, where school system personnel worked with Salvation Army shelter staff members to integrate separate after-school childcare programs (Anderson et al., 1995). Together, they developed a more comprehensive new program to provide student participants with academic, social, and recreational support.

Schools in high-risk areas should reach out to other non-residential agencies and organizations that also may have contact with these students and their families. Frequently, families without homes spend time in city and county parks, free recreation centers, and public libraries. Personnel in these settings should be aware of available educational services and encouraged to assist in identifying families in need. Ongoing correspondence (for example, letters, flyers, business cards) with agencies and organizations should provide information about available educational services, contact names, and 24-hour telephone numbers.

Development of effective and efficient interagency networks requires that the following topics be addressed: clarification of each agency's roles; devel-

opment of implementation plans for coordinating efforts; definition of mutually beneficial goals; resolution of turf problems; development and implementation of interagency agreements; facilitation of communication among local, regional, state, and federal agencies; and increased local awareness of available community resources (Baylor and Snowden, 1995; Helge, 1992). Effective interagency programs are family-focused, culturally sensitive, and streamlined through a single contact or entry. A comprehensive array of services is provided. Efforts are made to integrate services and to deliver them in inclusive settings (Melaville and Blank, 1991).

Less formal support can also be mobilized at the community level. Civic groups, churches, sororities and fraternities, retired citizens, and college students often contribute food, clothing, and other material resources. Additionally, they may serve as mentors to provide children and youth with special attention and support, including individual tutoring, homework assistance, transportation to after-school activities, access to libraries and computers, enrichment activities, and coaching in vocational and self-advocacy skills.

Creating Responsive Systems

As noted earlier, federal initiatives and the continuous work of advocates indicate that school districts must do more to meet the needs of students who are homeless, including those with disabilities. Concerted efforts are required to overcome those barriers to effective and efficient service delivery, which are created by inflexible administrative policies and procedures. Two primary areas in which educational leaders can be proactive are staff development and procedures for enrollment and transition.

Staff Development. A well-developed, ongoing, multidimensional program of staff development experiences should be designed to facilitate within-school and within-district awareness, understanding, and capability to respond to identified needs of students without homes. Ongoing staff development activities should be designed for all administrative, instructional, and support staff who need to be aware of their respective roles in assisting these families. Topics should include: legal and procedural issues (for example, enrollment, exiting, transfer of records) related to students with disabilities who are also homeless; "red flags," which would indicate that a student is homeless and might require additional consideration and support; positive, accepting communication skills with families and external agencies; methods for prioritized assessment and placement in specialized educational support programs; and strategies for instructional, academic, and extracurricular support. These programs should enable staff to respond to the following six priorities established by the U.S. Department of Education for meeting the special educational needs of students who are homeless (Cavazos, 1990): (a) remediation and tutoring of basic skills; (b) support services including counseling; (c) after-school and/or extended day services to provide basic needs and recreation; (d) awareness training for personnel; (e) educational assessment, screening, and placement; and (f) program continuity and stability.

Given current challenges of finding adequate time to schedule meaningful staff development experiences that can provide the depth of preparation needed, it is suggested that traditional staff development sessions be supplemented with video and audio-taped materials, computer programs, resource manuals, journal articles, classroom activity suggestions, trade books and bibliographies, newsletters, and fact sheets. In addition, opportunities to visit local shelters, dialogues with staff members from various community agencies, and participation in ongoing study groups can facilitate knowledge and skill development. Use of case study methodology, based upon actual cases within the school district or the community, can provide valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary groups (for example, principals, teachers, school social workers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, nurses, secretaries, bus drivers) to develop more responsive courses of action for future situations with these students and their families.

Interviews with key personnel in other school districts, community agencies, and families can also provide insight into additional areas that should be addressed through staff development experiences. High-risk schools may want to work with their media specialists to develop professional learning cen-

ters for the growing number of resources on homelessness. Consistent evaluation of various staff development endeavors should allow for participant feedback on the clarity and usefulness of materials and/or experiences presented, as well as provide opportunities for them to identify areas of need for future sessions related to this topic.

Enrollment and Transition Procedures. Policies and practices for enrolling students in school districts are often cited as primary barriers to families who are homeless (Cavazos, 1990; First and Cooper, 1990; Heflin and Rudy, 1991; Rosenman and Stein, 1990, Stronge and Helm, 1990). Once thought to be solely an urban problem, the growing number of families with students who are homeless requires even rural and suburban communities to reconsider their procedures for new students. Educational communities should also review and revise policies governing residency requirements, new arrival assessment and placement procedures, transportation services, and transfer of records.

Innovative approaches to eliminating potential bureaucratic barriers can be found in the New York City Public Schools' Students Living in Temporary Housing Program (Stronge and Tenhouse, 1990). Nontraditional approaches to resolving residency, guardianship, records transfer, and transportation issues include a delineation of options that may be selected by school personnel and/or families in responding to established state and local policy requirements. For example, distance requirements are waived for all transportation services, and free bus/train passes are provided as a coordinated effort between the city transit authority and the schools. Guardianship issues are resolved by broadening the definition of who can make educational decisions on behalf of children and youth who are homeless in the absence of parents and guardians to include skilled surrogates, community volunteers, and grandparents or others with whom these students may reside temporarily. Coordinated efforts often allow students to continue attending schools in which they registered at the beginning of the school year rather than transfer to a school near their new temporary residence. This helps students maintain existing friendships, it facilitates professional supervision and support, and it helps minimize disruptions in students' instructional programs.

Other efforts that have been implemented to address institutional impediments include regional agreements that delineate circumstances by which records may be transferred even if students have outstanding fees or have not returned books to the sending school district. Administrative uses of technology facilitate rapid transmittal of necessary transfer and enrollment information (for example, e-mail, fax communication, statewide student computer tracking systems). These agreements often outline stipulations to expedite the special education eligibility process by agreeing to accept student assessments completed elsewhere and/or continuing the evaluation process from the point at which it was interrupted by the family's move. This agreement facilitates IEP development, placement decisions, and service delivery in a more timely manner.

Office personnel and other student services staff (for example, guidance, social work, school psychology, special education, school health, attendance, and transportation) should be kept current on changes in local policies and the need to exercise caring and compassionate assistance to families who are seeking services, often without all of the required paperwork in hand. Areas where flexibility is allowed should be clearly identified. All school personnel should understand their respective roles and responsibilities in providing a continuum of care for these students.

Developing Social and Instructional Support

For students who are homeless and uprooted repeatedly, new schools are often traumatic experiences (Johnson, 1992). For those who also have disabilities, new school traumas are compounded by many other academic and social problems (for example, limited skills, poor self-confidence, low self-esteem, a history of past school failures). Academic and social adjustment problems make it difficult for many to settle into new schools quickly and make the most of the available learning time. The McKinney Act stipulates that available funds can be used to develop programs and services that facilitate social and instructional support for these students.

Inclusive learning communities facilitate student adjustment by providing social and instructional support. Supportive environments are built on foundations of equitable relationships, empathy, understanding, respect, social justice, reciprocity, and a sense of belonging (Gonzalez, 1992; Van der Klift and Kunc, 1994). Students are provided with learning experiences that foster peer interaction, teamwork, choice-making, and group decision making (Sailor, Anderson, Halvorsen, Doering, Filler, and Goetz, 1989). Staff members model behaviors that demonstrate their commitments to these concepts. Often the behaviors, emotional state, and the physical appearance of students who are homeless and the stigma associated with their lack of permanent homes interfere with their ability to develop supportive relationships with adults and peers (Eddowes, 1992; Tower, 1992). Direct instruction, constructive feedback, and support help students become more successful in developing these relationships. For example, poor living conditions make it difficult to maintain a clean and neat appearance. School personnel can help students by providing regular access to personal grooming facilities and supplies (for example, showers, deodorant, laundry facilities).

Advance preparation of students and staff members ensures better support for students in need. It reduces the likelihood that they will feel isolated in schools because peers and teachers lack skills and understanding. In supportive schools, everyone learns about issues of concern in their communities (for example, homelessness, disabilities, poverty). They develop skills so they can support affected community members appropriately (Thousand, Villa, and Nevin, 1994; Tower, 1992). While preparing effective peer helpers is a relatively easy process, facilitating friendship development is not (Johnson, 1992). It is important to remember that "helper" and "friend" are not interchangeable terms. Underlying inequities in helper-helpee relationships may limit genuine friendship development. For this reason, all students should have opportunities to perform helper roles (that is, coach, buddy, tutor, team leader). This helps ensure that students who receive special support are not socially stigmatized by well-intentioned efforts (Johnson, 1992). Cross-grade level support systems facilitate opportunities for assistance in many areas. Older students who may lack age-appropriate academic or social skills may be effective academic and/or social skills mentors for younger students.

Social and instructional support systems increase the likelihood that these students, many of whom do not have the emotional stamina to perform satisfactorily in traditional classrooms where competition is stressed, can succeed in school (Tower, 1992). Some well-known support models include buddy systems (Falvey, Coots, and Terry-Gage, 1992), peer tutoring (Greenwood, Delquadri, and Hall, 1989), and cooperative learning groups (Putnam 1993). Programs should also emphasize instruction in self-advocacy and enable students to access support services.

Buddy Support Systems. Assigning "buddies" to new students as they enter school facilitates their social-emotional adjustment. Buddies can teach new students useful rules, routines, and other peer-to-peer information that help them "fit in" more successfully and at a quicker pace (Falvey et al., 1992). Buddies can make the first few weeks easier for new students by increasing opportunities to meet others and to participate in lunchroom conversation, free time activities, and partner-selected study sessions (Johnson, 1992).

Peer Tutoring Programs. Peer tutoring offers new students appropriate models, expanded concept explanations, encouragement, feedback, and more skill practice opportunities than most teachers can provide. Student benefits have been well-documented. Frequently noted tutee benefits include significant academic gains, improved social interaction skills, and heightened self-esteem (Greenwood et al., 1989). Tutors also benefit from these experiences through increased communication skills, higher thinking skills, content knowledge, and self-esteem. Research suggests that successful peer partnerships are based on tutor preparation, supervised practice, and corrective feedback during and/or after instructional sessions (Greenwood et al., 1989; Sailor et al., 1989).

Cooperative Learning. Cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to work with others to accomplish individual and team learning goals (Putnam, 1993). Small heterogeneous groups work together on various academic subjects (for example, math, reading, language arts) and engage in activities designed to address a broad array of learning tasks (for example, new skill mastery, skill extension, problem-solving, project completion). Activities help participants learn the value of teamwork and celebrate team accomplishments (Putnam, 1993).

Self-Advocacy. Instructional priorities for identified students should include fundamental life skills (for example, personal grooming, laundry, money management) and self-advocacy skills (for example, problem-solving, decision making, accessing available resources). These skills give students greater control over their lives, help them access available resources, and prepare them for more independent living (Helge, 1992; Powers and Jaklitsch, 1992). This empowers students by enabling them to provide themselves with greater social and instructional support.

Self-advocacy should begin early in elementary school. For example, these students lose valuable information and learning experiences every time they move. Formal records transfer is a slow and laborious process; often, it does not occur. Students who can explain their own learning needs are more likely to get useful support services. With direct instruction, practice, and coaching support, elementary students can learn how to describe their own learning styles and previous school experiences (for example, personal strengths, weaknesses, services received). Advance preparation and planning allows some students to take useful information with them to new schools (for example, work samples, contact teacher names, textbook titles). This may be especially important for youth who are homeless, who are "runaway" or "throwaway kids" living on the streets or "doubled up," who do not have parents or family members to intervene for them in accessing resources and services (Anderson et al., 1995).

Conclusion

During the past decade, many school systems, public agencies, and community organizations have become aware of the growing population of students who are homeless. Unfortunately, given the complex academic and social support problems that many of these students experience, it is not surprising to find that few organizations are well prepared to address these needs.

When these students also have disabilities, appropriate and adequate support models are almost impossible to find. Data are difficult to gather. However, it appears that few of these students receive ongoing special education support; most appear to slip through the cracks of public education. Laws designed to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities often penalize these students unintentionally. Bureaucratic and educational obstacles are compounded by poor communication systems across schools, organizations, and agencies and by limited resources. These factors often impede opportunities for sharing resources, knowledge, and skills among care providers. Given these roadblocks, many professionals have recognized the need to collaborate within and across organizations more effectively. Better teamwork at all levels (for example, classroom, school, school district, community agency, state organizations) can facilitate more effective communication, knowledge and skill development, resource distribution, and student support.

In many communities, emerging models of collaboration to support students who are homeless represent significant changes in working relationships between schools and other agencies. It is important for schools and communities to recognize effective models that are based on ongoing collaboration between students, teachers, administrators, related services professionals, families, community leaders, and others. In addition to providing better support for this unique subset of the school population, these programs may also help pave the way for other collaborative ventures aimed at issues of common concern for schools and communities.

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SECTION THREE

Annotated Bibliography

The following matrix will enable readers to select summaries of articles that pertain to a particular topic of interest. Many of the bibliographic entries address several topics, reflecting the complexity and interrelatedness of the issues surrounding the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

	Background Issues	Community Issues	Educational Issues	Family/ Parent Issues	Legal/Policy Issues
Anderson, Janger, and Panton (1995) – (p. 140)	x	x		x	x
Attles (1997) – (p. 141)	x		x		
Bassuk and Rosenberg (1998) – (p. 142)	x				
Beck, Kratzer, and Isken (1997) – (p. 143)				x	
Black (1994) – (p. 144)		x		x	
Craig (1992) – (p. 145)			x	x	
First and Oakley (1993) – (p. 146)			x		x
Gibel (1996) – (p. 147)	x		x		
Hightower, Nathanson, and Wimberly (1997) – (p. 148)		x	x	x	x
Homes for the Homeless and Institute for Children and Poverty (1998) – (p. 149)	x				
Klein, Bittel, and Molnar (1993) – (p. 150)			x	x	
Klein and Foster (1998) – (p. 151)				x	
Linehan (1992) – (p. 152)	x		x		x

	Background Issues	Community Issues	Educational Issues	Family/ Parent Issues	Legal/Policy Issues
Lively and Kline (1996) – (p. 153)		✘	✘		
Maeroff (1998) – (p. 154)		✘	✘		
Masten (1992) – (p. 155)	✘				
Masten, Miliotis, Graham-Bermann, Rumors, and Neemann (1993) – (p. 156)				✘	
Masten, Sesma, Si-Asar, Lawrence, Miliotis, and Dionne (1997) – (p. 157)		✘	✘		
Molnar (1998) – (p. 158)	✘			✘	
National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1998) – (p. 159)			✘		✘
National Coalition for the Homeless (1997) – (p. 160)	✘				✘
Natriello, McDill, and Pallas (1990) – (p. 161)	✘				
Nunez (1994) – (p. 162)		✘		✘	
Nunez and Collignon (1999) – (p. 163)			✘	✘	
Pawlas (1994) – (p. 164)			✘	✘	
Pawlas, West, Brookes, and Russell (1994) – (p. 165)		✘			
Quint (1994) – (p. 166)		✘	✘	✘	
Rafferty and Shinn (1991) – (p. 167)	✘				
Reed and Sautter (1990) – (p. 168)	✘				
Reed-Victor and Stronge (1997) – (p. 169)			✘	✘	
Rescoria, Parker, and Stolley (1991) – (p. 170)	✘				
Rubin and Erikson (1996) – (p. 171)			✘		

	Background Issues	Community Issues	Educational Issues	Family/ Parent Issues	Legal/Policy Issues
Shane (1996) – (p. 172)	✘			✘	
Stronge (1993, August) – (p. 173)			✘		✘
Stronge (1993, December) – (p. 174)	✘		✘		✘
Stronge (1995) – (p. 175)	✘		✘		
Stronge and Reed-Victor (1999) – (p. 176)	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Vissing, Schroepfer, and Bloise (1994) – (p. 177)			✘	✘	
Wall (1996) – (p. 178)			✘		
Walsh and Buckley (1994) – (p. 179)			✘		
Ward (1998) – (p. 180)		✘		✘	
Williams and DeSander (1999) – (p. 181)			✘		✘
Woods (1996) – (p. 182)			✘		
Yon and Sebastie-Kadie (1994) – (p. 183)		✘	✘	✘	

"An Evaluation of State and Local Efforts to Serve the Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth"

Authors: Anderson, L. M.; Janger, M. I.; and Panton, Karen L. M.

Date: 1995

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

Type of Publication: Report

Summary: The authors review an investigation of how schools have been successful at removing the barriers of homeless students' access to school under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Although almost all states have revised laws and policies to improve access by homeless students, many students are still denied access because of requirements for guardian permission and immunization records.

The report includes the following:

- An in-depth review of policies, implications, assistance provided, and school successes, revealing that problems still occur for homeless children and youth
- Statistics on homelessness, emotional problems, and educational and social needs of homeless children and youth
- Responses to the McKinney Act by states and the resulting changes in policy and legislation
- A description of state-level services and state coordinator activities designed to meet the needs of homeless children and youth, such as identification, tracking, awareness, and access to programs
- Identification of districts with McKinney Act sub-grants and descriptions of their programs
- Details on national and local issues related to free, appropriate, public education for homeless students and youth

"The Effects of Homelessness on the Academic Achievement of Children"

Authors: Attles, H. S. E.

Date: 1997

Publication Information: New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Type of Publication: From a series of books edited by Stuart Bruchey: *Children of Poverty: Studies on the Effects of Single Parenthood* and *The Feminization of Poverty and Homelessness*

Summary: This doctoral dissertation research evaluates the impact that changes in living environments have on the academic achievement of school-age children. The study employs a quantitative case study methodology to collect, analyze, and interpret the standardized test scores of seven students, ranging in ages from five to eight during the years 1988 to 1991. Nine subtests from the California Achievement Tests, taken during two separate administrations—one while the students were residing in a shelter and again after the students were in more stable housing—comprise the data sets. These scores are compared with one another in each case and are also compared to the norm test scores from within the district.

Results indicate that the children's stay in the shelter had a negative effect on their achievement during their residence at the shelter, as based on test scores that fell below the district's norm on each of the subtests. Charts and tables are used to report the discrepancies between each of the students' subtest scores and the district's norm scores. Data suggest also that unless additional academic support is given to children upon their return to more stable residence, long-term negative effects may result.

Implications for practice and recommendations for future research include

- Increased pathways, which ensure enrollment, attendance, and success for homeless children regardless of their place of residence
- Revision of federal, state, or local laws, regulations, and practices that may act as barriers

"Why Does Family Homelessness Occur? A Case-Control Study"

Authors: Bassuk, E. L. and Rosenberg, L.

Date: July 1988

Publication Information: *American Journal of Public Health*, 78 (7), 783-788

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article reports a research study that compared homeless families and poor housed families along several different dimensions. Forty-nine single mothers and their children were included in the homeless sample, and 81 single mothers and their children were included in the poor, housed-family sample. The study was conducted in six homeless shelters and several poor neighborhoods in Boston. A semi-structured interview and a structured questionnaire were administered to both sets of mothers, and the two sets of children were evaluated using the same three assessment instruments. Results suggest important differences and similarities between the two groups. In the homeless group, mothers were more likely than mothers in the housed group to report

- A higher level of education
- Having moved more frequently and been more likely to have been in shelters before
- Maintaining an ongoing relationship with their own fathers
- Having been abused in childhood or as adults
- Stronger contacts with men rather than women
- That their own mothers had worked
- Substance abuse and/or psychiatric problems

In addition, the children of homeless mothers were more likely than housed children to

- Manifest at least one major developmental lag
- Be failing or doing below-average work in school
- Indicate the need for psychiatric referral and evaluation

The authors conclude that the lack of both adequate housing for the poor and adequate support from AFDC are factors that contribute to homelessness, especially for poor single mothers who have weaker networks for support as well as histories of substance abuse and psychiatric problems.

"Caring for Transient Students in One Urban Elementary School"

Authors: Beck, L. G.; Kratzer, C. C.; and Isken, J.A.

Date: July 1997

Publication Information: *Journal for a Just and Caring Education,* 3 (3), 343-369

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: The authors write from a philosophical commitment to an ethic of care as an intrinsic right, an innate characteristic of human beings, and a desirable characteristic of schools. Their qualitative study, enhanced with brief case examples of urban transient students, examines an overcrowded, academically and socially successful urban California elementary school, where, in only one year of the study, 80 percent of the students were transient. The school developed strategies for working with urban migrant, binational, open enrollment, and daycare children. The strategies included the following:

- A structured intake process that devoted time and staff expertise up front to make the correct placement for a new student with or without previous school records
- Restructured classrooms that used bilingual instruction with all students
- Team structures (such as a teacher assistance team and a resource teacher team) that provided support for teachers, students, and parents
- Flexible strategies for individualized instruction, including computer lab, tutoring (instructional aides, volunteers, cross-age), and remediation
- Open discussion of frustrations, commitments, and accommodations
- Collegial support (interpersonal and instructional)
- A commitment to parent outreach

The school developed its ethic of caring in a district committed to school autonomy, which enabled the school to chart its own course toward building a climate and structure to meet its students' needs. The principal nurtured democratic practices, teacher leadership, and caring practices, and the teachers benefited from focused, substantive professional development. The authors conclude this report with recommendations for teacher education, district policy-making, record keeping, resource allocation, childcare issues, curriculum, and assessment.

"At Home in Your Schools"

Authors: Black, S.

Date: February 1994

Publication Information: *The Executive Educator*, 16 (2), 47-50

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: The author draws on research, the law, and the homeless profile of a typical non-urban school district to portray the plight of homeless children in rural, suburban, and urban communities nationwide and to outline both legal requirements and practical interventions for managing this issue. Profiling homeless children and families, the article points out that

- Homeless families have different kinds of living arrangements. They might double up with other families, stay at shelters in churches or community centers, live on the streets, or be runaways or castaways.
- Homeless children might or might not look different from other children in schools.
- Single mothers with children comprise approximately one-third of the homeless population.
- School records often do not follow the transient homeless.
- Family problems often include lack of education, drug and alcohol addiction, mental illnesses, lack of coping skills, and poverty-related hunger and illnesses.

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, a federal law in effect since 1987, provides funds to the states for shelter, food, and health care and stipulates conditions for educating homeless children, including

- Providing homeless children with access to public education
- Gathering data, providing for dispute resolution, and maintaining accessible records
- Providing school setting placement in the best interests of the child
- Providing transportation, tutoring, and other services related to improving the child's academic progress

The author further outlines strategies for schools to employ in accommodating homeless children. A key strategy suggests training faculty and staff in the characteristics and needs of homeless families and children. The article also describes practical steps to take for integrating these children into schools and in dealing with typical homeless students' daily needs and problems.

"The Educational Needs of Children Living with Violence"

Authors: Craig, S. E.

Date: September 1992

Publication Information: *Phi Delta Kappan,* 74 (1), 67-71

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article examines the nature of the relationship between family violence and student performance. Among issues discussed are the emotional, social, cognitive, and language development problems that result from family abuse and violence.

The article clearly describes developmental problems caused by abuse, how they impair the student, and how these impairments are manifested in the classroom. Problems with intellectual development and the ability to encode events and develop sequential memory can contribute to learning and social difficulties related to the lack of consistency and predictability in the students' home lives. Impairments for abused children and youth often involve the inability to establish cause and effect relationships and affect sequential semantic memory. Another effect of abuse stems from the abused child's or youth's inability to see himself as able to impact and control his world, resulting in learned helplessness. Few abused children and youth look at their own needs, focusing instead on the needs of the abuser (usually the parent). Poor communication and limited speech are other signs of abuse. Abused children often rely more on gesture than language in their communications.

After explaining the cognitive, social, and emotional effects of abuse on the child, the article offers teaching recommendations for these students. The strategies mentioned for teaching abused students include

- A constructivist approach, with students as active participants in their own learning
- Cooperative learning and group work in a consistent, structured classroom
- Special education services, when appropriate, for some abused students

The author expresses the belief that teachers can positively impact an abused child's life.

"Policy, Behavior, and Research: Changing Schooling for Homeless Children and Youth"

Authors: First, P. F. and Oakley, J.

Date: August 1993

Publication Information: *Education and Urban Society,* 25 (4), 424-437

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: The article focuses on the changes in homelessness in the 1990s and the need to change and adapt homeless policies at the local, state, and federal levels. The homeless population has increased without policies to accommodate new homeless students. Efforts have focused on ensuring that homeless children and youth attend school and on addressing their problems. Problems homeless children and youth face and suggested policy alternatives follow:

- Immunization and vaccinations are required of students prior to enrollment. Recommendation: Admit the students into school and provide vaccinations in cooperation with the city and county health departments.
- Transportation barriers to school occur for many homeless students. Recommendation: Enforce the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act requirement that transportation barriers be eliminated.
- Many parents in homeless families are uninvolved in their children's education. Recommendation: Encourage parents to become involved with problems and concerns related to the educational needs of their children and to attend meetings with teachers and school staff that serve their children. Arrange workshops to teach parents necessary skills and to provide information on the educational rights of homeless children.
- Domestic violence shelters often are not considered homeless shelters. As a result, children staying at these shelters often are not accorded the educational rights of homeless children. Recommendation: Inform parents and schools that, by law, schools must treat all shelters the same.
- Some parents opt to home-school their students. Recommendation: Both state and local education agencies need to monitor home-schooling for homeless students.

The article provides general steps and guidelines for administrators and schools to gather data, work with social service agencies, and advocate for the needs of homeless children and youth with laws at the state and federal level. It describes efforts between communities and schools to combat homelessness, especially in large cities.

"Attitudes of Children Toward Their Homeless Peers"

Authors: Gibel, L. C.

Date: 1996

Publication Information: New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Type of Publication: Research study from a series of books edited by Stuart Bruchey: *Children of Poverty: Studies on the Effects of Single Parenthood and The Feminization of Poverty and Homelessness*

Summary: Caucasian middle school, junior high school, and high school students in an ethnically mixed, middle-class New Jersey suburb of New York City provided the sample for this study. No more than five percent of the 6,800 students in the school division qualified as homeless. The study used a revised version of the Attitude and Belief Scale (ABS), a semantic differential scale (SemD), and the Social Distance Scale (SocD) as measures.

Analysis suggests the following generalized results:

- Peers in school have negative attitudes toward homeless children and prefer not to associate with them because they are poor and homeless.
- Attitudes and preferences tend to vary according to socioeconomic status.
- Ethnicity results are mixed. However, respondents tend to perceive African American homeless students more negatively than Caucasian homeless students.

These results, combined with previous research, reinforce the following findings:

- Both poor and homeless children face problems including developmental delays, psychological and emotional problems, poor school performance, and health problems. However, homeless children face even greater risk for school failure and more health problems.
- Adults and children form in-groups based largely on social class and level of housing.
- Teacher prejudices and reactions to labels given students lead to differential treatment of students, and this influences student responses to their peers.

Suggested interventions include counseling, life-skills training programs, training for students and staff, implementing a buddy system, and creating a safe haven for homeless students. The book includes copies of the measures used and an extensive reference list.

"Meeting the Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth: A Resource for Schools and Communities"

Authors: Hightower, A. M.; Nathanson, S. P.; and Wimberly, G. L., III

Date: 1997

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education

Type of Publication: Booklet

Summary: This 61-page booklet provides an updated version of a 1992 publication, *Serving Homeless Children*. Using the changes incorporated in the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act as revised and reauthorized under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the authors provide strategies, multiple examples of model interventions, and ideas for policy changes. Discussions address the following topics:

- Ensuring access to school
- Attending to students' personal needs
- Increasing educational support
- Raising awareness
- Collaborating to increase services, access, and support

Each section of the booklet begins with a short case study followed by a discussion of an issue with relevant McKinney Act provisions boxed for easy reference. Model interventions from across the country conclude each section.

The final section identifies ways groups and individuals can assist homeless children and youth in their communities. Suggestions are offered for principals, district-level administrators, school secretaries and other school-level administrative staff, teachers, school counselors, other school staff (such as nurses, liaison personnel, bus drivers, pupil personnel workers), and shelter providers. The booklet concludes with suggestions for partnerships and other arrangements with state, educational, and social service agencies, community organizations, colleges, and universities. The document also provides a reference list and an annotated resource list.

"Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America"

Authors: Homes for the Homeless and The Institute for Children and Poverty

Date: 1998

Publication Information: New York: The Institute for Children and Poverty

Type of Publication: Research report

Summary: This report compiles data from surveys of 777 homeless parents with 2,049 homeless children who were residing in shelters in ten cities in the United States. Both similarities and differences are noted to emphasize the depth and breadth of the problem of homeless families on local, state, and national levels. Parent demographics, housing, education, employment/income, and children were the areas of focus for this landmark study.

The data revealed that

- Single mothers with two-to-three children head the typical homeless family.
- African Americans are over-represented in the homeless population, even in cities where they represent a very small minority of the total population.
- Repeated instances of homelessness occurred in 40 percent of the target population.
- Educational attainment levels were lower for the sample homeless parents than the general population.
- Although most of the homeless parents were unemployed at the time of the survey, over 70 percent have a history of employment. (Employment is closely associated with level of education.)

The report concludes with an analysis of similarities between homeless and welfare families, noting important implications of welfare reform for both groups.

"No Place to Call Home: Supporting the Needs of Homeless Children in the Early Childhood Classroom"

Authors: Klein, T.; Bittel, C.; and Molnar, J.

Date: September 1993

Publication Information: *Young Children,* 48 (6), 22-31

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: The article explores the characteristics and issues of homelessness, particularly for children of preschool age. The authors emphasize the critical role early childhood education plays in providing the foundation for future learning and in providing for timely intervention as needed. The article focuses on the fit between the early childhood classroom environment to the unique needs of the very young child. In addition to providing references, the article includes a list of suggested readings.

Klein and her colleagues have identified the following seven aspects of a classroom program requiring special emphasis to meet the needs of young homeless children and related strategies:

- ***Routines:*** simple, relaxed, predictable; attention to transitions; individual attention at mealtimes and extra support at naptimes
- ***Materials and activities:*** limited stimulation through controlled choices, maximum developmental range, opportunity for self-expression, conducive to building coping skills and development of self-concept, language-building, motor-skill building
- ***Adult-child groupings:*** special attention, small groups, attention to socially appropriate interpersonal interactions
- ***Space:*** homelike, uncluttered environment with private areas and personalized spaces
- ***Coming and goings:*** consistency-fostering routines, trust-building, accommodating the reality of departures for those who leave and those who stay
- ***Parents:*** flexibility to meet individual needs, information sharing, decision sharing, nurturing, special spaces, involvement and collaboration, support groups, and services
- ***Staff support:*** co-worker support and encouragement, ongoing staff development and in-service, systems for sharing and tracking student information

"Support and Education Programs for Parents"

Authors: Klein, T. and Foster, M.

Date: 1998

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America Press, 99-109

Type of Publication: Chapter in *Preserving Childhood for Children in Shelters*, edited by Thelma Harms, Adele Richardson Ray, and Pam Rolandelli

Summary: This chapter provides practical, activity-based suggestions for implementing a parent-educator program for families in homeless shelters. The need for such a program is based on research that documents the devastating effects of homelessness on the mental health of parents in shelters and, subsequently, their children. The authors list specific suggestions for the roles and responsibilities of parent educators and shelter support staff. Included in the list are formal approaches to parent education, such as Parent Effectiveness Training (concrete skills and practical procedures that help parents rear their children) and Raising America's Children (a ten-part Public Television series that provides child development information).

The chapter also offers a wide array of tips for informal approaches to parent education. The author makes the following recommendations for designing parent support programs in shelters:

- Involve parents in early childhood programs at the shelter.
- Provide parent rooms and spaces to meet informally and build peer support.
- Organize parent activities that connect them to one another.
- Help parents to understand and appreciate their children.
- Involve parents as classroom volunteers and active participants in the programs.
- Provide concrete supportive services for parents, such as referral for medical care.

The publication includes specific activities to implement each of the above recommendations.

"Children Who Are Homeless: Educational Strategies for School Personnel"

Authors: Linehan, M. F.

Date: September 1992

Publication Information: *Phi Delta Kappan,* 74 (1), 61-64, 66

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: Former Director of the Massachusetts Department of Education's Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, Michelle Linehan, addresses issues of homelessness at a practical level for teachers. Linehan describes two separate professional development initiatives: a series of inservice training workshops that brought together school personnel, staff members of shelters and social service agencies, and formerly homeless parents and another series of workshops at the school and district level. The article also provides information about the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, with examples of Massachusetts' initiatives under the Act.

Linehan identifies four conditions that characterize the experience of homeless children, pointing out that these conditions affect different children in vastly different ways.

- Constant moving may result in children having no sense of roots, personal space, or possessions, being restless, failing to complete things, fighting at school for what little control they might gain, being easily frustrated, having trouble with transitions, and having poor attention spans.
- Frequent change of schools may lead children to avoid developing relationships, may result in increased time out of school and loss of academic progress, and may involve a lag in receiving records from previous schools.
- Overcrowded living quarters may cause children to develop behavior problems and experience gross motor delays from lack of play opportunities.
- Lack of access to basic resources such as clothing, food, and transportation may contribute to health, behavior, and attendance problems.

The article offers a repertoire of strategies related to each condition that teachers can employ. These strategies include a) varying instructional techniques, b) accessing intervention programs, c) identifying the unique personal needs of these children and taking subtle steps to meet those needs, and d) creating ways to integrate the students into the activities of their peers and the school.

"The School as a Tool for Survival for Homeless Children"

Authors: Lively, K. L. and Kline, P. F.

Date: 1996

Publication Information: New York: Garland Publishing

Type of Publication: From a series of books edited by Stuart Bruchey: *Children of Poverty: Studies on the Effects of Single Parenthood* and *The Feminization of Poverty and Homelessness*

Summary: This volume reports a study of how one transitional center responded to the educational needs of homeless children. Using developmental psychology theory, the authors frame the study within an ecological perspective that emphasizes an individual's response to his/her environment.

Combining practices from both ethnographic and phenomenological research methods, the authors employed a variety of strategies, including the following:

- Using weekly children's journaling, observations, interviews, and surveys to gather data on the program they called Hopeful Horizons
- Attending monthly planning meetings of the community board that supported the center and studying various documents produced by the center, including policies and procedures manuals, student data records, and program brochures
- Conducting psychological assessments of the children during both the 1990-91 and 1994-95 school years in order to determine their "magnitude of motivation," indications of anxiety and depression, and attitudes toward school and intellect

Results indicate that issues of governance created by the community board/school board alliance are difficult to resolve. The community board consisted of volunteers with lofty ideals, which were initially blocked by the school board policies and practices. Eventually, the community board's determination to serve the children prevailed. Formal assessments of the children revealed that although many had higher-than-average levels of anxiety, perceptions of success remained high.

"Altered Destinies: Making Life Better for School Children in Need"

Authors: Maeroff, G. I.

Date: February 1998

Publication Information: *Phi Delta Kappan,* 79 (6), 425-432

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article reviews several programs that address ways in which "social capital" can be cultivated in educational communities that are responsive to students in poverty. The author proposes that limited access to the networks and opportunities, often readily available to the more economically advantaged, prevents many of the nation's poorer students from achieving their academic, social, and vocational goals. He describes the following four areas of support that the programs he reviewed have provided for poor students:

- A sense of connectedness
- A sense of well-being
- A sense of academic initiative
- A sense of knowing

A sense of connectedness can be created in impoverished students through support networks, such as Community in Schools (CIS), and in-school, staff-initiated programs, such as monthly principal meetings with students and learning/support classes for both parents and students. Programs that provide an array of medical and social services on school campuses increase students' sense of well-being. Some of these programs provide necessary connections for third-party billing, allowing schools to tap into Medicaid funds for mental health therapy. Programs such as the Advancement Via Individualized Determination (AVID) Program increase students' sense of self-worth and also result in higher academic motivation. Other programs offer increased opportunities to build a sense of knowing by providing field trips to libraries, museums, and university-affiliated enrichment courses.

"Homeless Children in the United States: Mark of a Nation at Risk"

Authors: Masten, A. S.

Date: April 1992

Publication Information: *American Psychological Society*, 1 (2), 41-44

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: Although not a research study, the article surveys the issues and problems facing homeless children and youth. The author discusses studies on homeless children and youth and issues that need further examination, such as "runaway" or "throwaway" homeless youth. The author describes the effects of homelessness on children and youth living with their families. Detrimental effects of homelessness include the following:

- Poor health—Homeless children and youth have two-to-four times the rate of illnesses experienced by other children and youth and often lack immunizations
- Stress from hunger and from loss of friends, security, and possessions
- Delayed cognitive development—Being without a shelter, having an inadequate diet, and poor school attendance adversely affect cognitive development
- Social and emotional problems, especially anti-social behavior
- Barriers to education and to other much-needed services, despite the provisions of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

The article explains the need for policy development and for program assistance to homeless and poor families at several levels of intervention from schools to communities to government. The article also discusses the necessity for coordinating the multifaceted efforts across issues and among the domains of research, policy, and intervention.

"Children in Homeless Families: Risks to Mental Health and Development"

Authors: Masten, A. S.; Miliotis, D.; Graham-Bermann, S. A.; Rumors, M.L.; and Neemann, J.

Date: 1993

Publication Information: *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61 (2), 335-343

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article reports a study of mental health risks in children of homeless families. Using multiple measures of mental health status of both children and parents, the researchers investigated the relationships among stressful life events, child behavior problems, child status and opinions, dysphoric mood, parent symptoms, and cumulative risk factors in two groups of families—homeless and low-income housed. Ninety-three parents and their 159 children and 76 adolescents (all between the ages of 8 and 17 years of age), who resided in one particular shelter over a period of four months, were members of the homeless group studied. Fifty-three families with 62 children and 33 adolescents made up the comparison group of low-income housed participants. Results indicate the following:

- Homeless children have greater exposure to stress and fewer resources than low-income children of similar background whose families have housing.
- Both homeless and housed children exhibit high levels of overall behavior problems, with externalizing problems being the most prevalent.
- An underlying "continuum of risk" might best represent the impact of life stressors on the two populations, with the homeless children at greater risk.
- Risk and life events predict problems in children from homeless and from low-income housed families.
- Dysphoria does not correlate significantly with depression among children from homeless or low-income housed families, although homeless adolescents reported lower self-worth and more negatively perceived academic competence.
- Girls exhibit more behavior problems than boys, with young homeless girls and adolescent low-income housed girls being the most affected.

"Educational Risks for Children Experiencing Homelessness"

Authors: Masten, A. S.; Sesma, Jr., A.; Si-Asar, R.; Lawrence, C.; Miliotis, D.; and Dionne, J. A.

Date: 1997

Publication Information: *Journal of School Psychology,* 35 (1), 27-46

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article reports a study investigating educational risks for 73 children, primarily African-American, ages six to 11, living in a Minneapolis homeless shelter. The study followed the families as they moved into housing. School access did not pose a problem. Using measures that addressed varying perspectives, the study sought to determine if these children had significant academic delays and if their academic achievement related to behavior problems and adaptive functioning in the classroom. A summary of findings follows:

- Results tend to support previous research findings that educational problems often accompany residential instability.
- These students evidenced high levels of grade retention, absenteeism, and lower scores on group-administered achievement tests.
- Teachers identified serious adjustment problems for many of these children.
- The results indicate a relationship between academic and psychological problems, although the degree of relationship varied, and not all children demonstrated both.

The authors offer the following observations and suggestions:

- Societal-level cultural and economic problems compound the complexity of problems faced by the homeless.
- Schools cannot solve these societal-level issues, but they can develop strategies to address practical problems, such as nutrition, hygiene, safety and security concerns, peer problems, social stigma, and behavioral problems.
- The varying strategies of assessment used in this study proved effective in conducting research with mobile, high-risk children.

This report includes technical information and tables of disaggregated results. In addition to the African-American student results, the report also provides results for American Indian sub-groups.

"The Effects of Homelessness on Children and Families"

Authors: Molnar, J.

Date: 1998

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America Press, 5-22

Type of Publication: Chapter in *Preserving Childhood for Children in Shelters*, edited by Thelma Harms, Adele Richardson Ray, and Pam Rolandelli

Summary: This chapter presents an overview of the effects of homelessness on children and families, using research to illustrate the most critical needs for intervention. A review of the ongoing social factors that have contributed to the increasing incidence and devastating effects of homelessness on families and children in the past 20 years is included. The chapter also describes characteristics of homeless families and refers to several research studies to illustrate the effects of homelessness on the health and developmental status of children. Finally, the chapter proposes possible solutions through "appropriate and timely interventions," including early childhood programs that support not only the developmental process but also family functioning as well.

Further recommendations from the author include

- The creation of a system of integrated case management that targets specific interventions for each family
- The promotion of services that are empowering, not paternalistic
- The provision of developmentally appropriate activities for children
- The establishment of a continuum of support services

An extensive bibliography provides an excellent source of research on both statistical data and documentation of the effects of homelessness on families and children.

"Making the Grade: Challenges and Successes in Providing Educational Opportunities for Children and Youth in Homeless Situations"

Authors: National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Date: January 1998

Publication Information: Des Moines, IA: Author (Iowa State Department of Education)

Type of Publication: Association report

Summary: This report from the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NASCEHCY) describes ways in which funding from the Stewart B. McKinney Act supported the education of homeless children during the 1995-96 school year. It also provides a brief legislative history of federal support for educating homeless children, as well as recommendations from NASCEHCY for future political action to support homeless education. These recommendations include

- Maintain federal statutes that address the education of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Fully fund the McKinney Program.
- Require the U.S. Department of Education to conduct a nationwide census of the numbers of homeless children and youth.

Fifty state profiles offer short narratives of the ways in which the federal funds to support schooling for homeless children have been operationalized over the 1995-96 school year. Some of those projects included

- Tutoring centers, after-school study centers, and classrooms at shelter sites
- Parent/school liaisons
- Field trips, summer school programs, and school supplies
- Shelter and school staff training/professional development
- School access assistance and transportation
- Help-lines and counselors

In addition, the state profiles outlined the number of LEAs receiving funds under the McKinney Act, the amount awarded, and an estimate of the number of children served.

"Homelessness in America Unabated and Increasing: A Ten-Year Perspective"

Authors: National Coalition for the Homeless (Duffield, B. and Gleason, M. A.)

Date December 1997

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: National Coalition for the Homeless

Type of Publication: Report

Summary: This report focuses on the current state of homelessness in America, outlining the evolution of services over the past decade through personal perspectives of national, federal, state, and local-level advocates and service providers. Statistical information from 11 cities, four states, three federal agencies, and three community projects–plus, in-depth descriptions of more than 20 different programs that serve homeless families in America–comprise this report. The first three sections of the report summarize findings, draw conclusions, and outline future directions. Findings and conclusions include the following:

- Homelessness is growing because housing demand still exceeds supply.
- Adequate services are not available.
- Efforts to criminalize homelessness are futile and unjust.
- Homeless families with children represent the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population.
- Causes have remained the same: unavailability of low-cost housing and inadequate income.
- Policies to address these causes have not been effectively implemented.
- State/national policies limit access to shelters, leaving many homeless people on the streets.

Future directions include the development of a national policy to combat homelessness that

- Addresses the wages of low-income workers and provides for low-cost housing
- Funds education and job training for homeless and the under- and unemployed
- Provides for treatment for addictions among homeless
- Ensures children's rights to education and restricts block grants to states

In-depth profiles of homeless programs include transcripts of interviews with service providers.

"Schooling Disadvantaged Children: Racing Against Catastrophe"

Authors: Natriello, G.; McDill, E. L.; and Pallas, A. M.

Date: 1990

Publication Information: New York: Teachers College Press

Type of Publication: Book

Summary: This book discusses issues relevant to disadvantaged students and describes programs that seek to reduce the number of student dropouts. The authors define educationally disadvantaged students as those having been exposed to insufficient educational experiences through formal schooling, the family, and/or the community. They further identify five key factors associated with students considered educationally disadvantaged: racial/ethnic identity, poverty status, family composition, mother's education, and language background. The book reviews related literature, then discusses and analyzes intervention programs at the preschool, elementary school, and secondary school levels. Strategies are offered for restructuring schools to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. A discussion of policy implications is presented. The authors conclude that, while some modest successes have emerged, overall success is limited.

In summary, the authors propose a new set of "Three R's": Resources, Restructuring, and Research, and they suggest the following major recommendations:

- Substantially and dramatically increase resources devoted to educating disadvantaged students such that all target populations at all school levels receive the requisite services.
- Target prenatal, neonatal, and infant care programs first.
- Devote resources to disadvantaged students throughout their educational careers.
- Restructure schools to enable decisions to be made about disadvantaged students at the school and classroom level rather than at higher levels remote from the students, their families, and their needs.
- Realign schools, families, and communities by increasing and integrating family involvement in the school, social services, and public/private initiatives.
- Increase research on the education of disadvantaged students and improve program evaluation.

"Hopes, Dreams, and Promise: The Future of Homeless Children in America"

Authors: Nunez, R.

Date: 1994

Publication Information: New York: Homes for the Homeless

Type of Publication: Book

Summary: This book describes in detail the philosophy and programs that Homes for the Homeless has developed over the past decade in New York City. Through narrative stories, photographs of homeless families, and graphs and charts that demonstrate the program's effectiveness, each of the organization's areas of focus is presented using a common format: introducing rationale, describing components, and sharing results. The first section of the book reviews the "legacy of family homelessness," including the changes over the past decade, specifically in New York City. Next, the author describes the philosophy of Homes for the Homeless as "developing family through learning centers." These centers of learning promote the education of children, adults, and families; prevention and preservation; and permanent housing programs.

The rationale presented for each of the areas of focus includes a thorough description of the problem inherent within the culture of homelessness. These include

- Problems within the traditional model of transitional living
- Effects of homelessness on learning for children
- Need for parent education
- Restoration of family health and strength
- Effects of ignoring support to families who move on to permanent housing

The components of the various program areas are described in detail and illustrated through narratives, photographs, charts, and tables. The results demonstrate a profound and positive impact on the cycle of homelessness for families who have experienced a fully integrated and comprehensive program to prevent and protect them from its reoccurrence.

"Communities of Learning: A Bridge from Poverty and Homelessness to Education and Stability"

Authors: Nunez, R. and Collignon, K.

Date: January 1999

Publication Information: *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 5 (1), 72-88

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article presents collaborative communities of learning as an innovative model for addressing the immediate educational problems manifested by homeless children at the same time that other interventions address the larger issues of homeless families. It features three model communities of learning: the American Family Inns of New York City, the Salem-Keizer Public Schools' Homeless Children and Families Program in Salem, Oregon, and the Center for Homeless in South Bend, Indiana. Communities of learning focus on

- Specialized (rather than "special") education for homeless children
- Parent education
- Family support services

These successful programs strive to counter the ongoing state of crisis that affects homeless children and their families by overcoming inherent logistical obstacles, addressing psychological factors, and attending to the realities of deep poverty that interfere with effective parenting. Suggested strategies include

- ***Child education:*** Provide for tutoring and homework assistance, continuity, and parental involvement.
- ***Parent education:*** Address real-time, relevant issues; accommodate literacy levels; use nontraditional one-on-one or small group formats; remain flexible; and incorporate childcare or child education so parents can participate.
- ***Family support:*** Provide for clothing, food, and shelter needs; address family violence, substance abuse, and mental illness issues; and work in liaison and partnership with other service providers to meet these needs.

"Homeless Students at the School Door"

Authors: Pawlas, G. E.

Date: May 1994

Publication Information: *Educational Leadership,* 51 (8), 79-82

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article addresses the circumstances surrounding homeless education and provides specific suggestions for schools to implement in meeting the needs of homeless students. George Pawlas summarizes the provisions of the Stewart B. McKinney Act and presents issues such as school placement, transportation, loss of school time, transition problems, the physical and psychological effects of homelessness on children, and consequent academic problems. The journal in which this article appears also includes a brief companion article by Pawlas and others describing a similar model program.

Pawlas offers a "Baker's Dozen"—practical suggestions that administrators, teachers, and staff can implement on behalf of homeless children and youth in a school or school district.

- Find out if there are any shelters or hotels/motels housing homeless families.
- Have a volunteer advocate for homeless children in each school.
- Provide shelters with copies of newsletters, school calendars, etc.
- Try to meet with parents at shelters.
- Get help with clothing and school supplies from parent and civic groups.
- Assign each homeless student a buddy.
- Provide "conveyable resources" (such as clipboards, notebooks) for homeless students to complete homework. Also provide playtime in their school day.
- Provide a consistent daily structure.
- Incorporate life skills such as listening, following instructions, social skills, and self-esteem enhancers into the curriculum.
- When a homeless child must leave the school, provide closure.
- Provide transition help such as giving them records to carry with them.
- Set up a tutoring system.
- Give homeless children the love, support, and consideration any child needs.

"A Safety Net for Homeless Students"

Authors: Pawlas, G. E.; West, G.; Brookes, C. J.; and Russell, T.

Date: May 1994

Publication Information: *Educational Leadership,* 51 (8), 82-83

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article accompanies "Homeless Students at the School Door" by George Pawlas. The authors describe the impact of homelessness in Orange County, Florida, and the interventions implemented to meet the challenge. A 22-member task force from the school district and across the community devised the following services for homeless students and their families:

- Even Start and First Start services extended to shelter families and to pre- and post-homeless families
- Tutors and intervention programs in both math and reading for shelter families
- Scholarships for before- and after-school programs
- Volunteer advocates or advocacy teams in each school
- Undergraduate education student volunteers who coordinate their tutoring with the tutees' classroom teachers
- Student Mentoring Corps to expand homeless students' horizons through field trips
- Continued attention to larger issues such as transportation, housing, and childcare

The authors offer the following reasons for the success of the Orange County program:

- Awareness of the scope of the problem among community leaders
- Common vision
- Consistently putting concerns into action
- Involvement of persistent key people who have contacts in the community
- Sharing the glory, good news, and responsibility for correcting the problems
- A "can-do" attitude of all participants

"Schooling Homeless Children: A Working Model for America's Public Schools"

Authors: Quint, S.

Date: 1994

Publication Information: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York

Type of Publication: Book

Summary: This book presents a qualitative case study on the collaborative efforts of a public elementary school and its surrounding neighborhood to address the education of homeless students. It describes a school that was deteriorating both academically and psychologically but was transformed into a vibrant, successful school. Principal Carole Williams' vision for Benjamin Franklin Day Elementary School in Seattle, Washington, reinvigorated the staff and the community. Under her leadership, the school, now referred to as B. F. Day Family School, was transformed into a school that involved all students, their families, and the community.

In 1985, B. F. Day was a 97-year-old, three-story, dilapidated brick building housing two separate and unequal programs. One program on the main floor was an alternative program for 180 kindergarten through fifth-grade gifted students. The second program was a kindergarten through fifth grade school on the second floor and basement with students from the surrounding poor urban neighborhoods. Due to major demographic shifts and the demolition of 800 low-income housing units in the 1980s, B. F. Day School was educating more children from poverty, including students living in homeless shelters and on the street.

This book discusses some of the major elements of the transformation. These elements include teacher commitment; community, university, and corporation affiliations; and breaking the bureaucratic mold. Chapters address emergent themes and recommendations for the future. The appendix contains information on methodology, research questions, and interview protocols.

"The Impact of Homelessness on Children"

Authors: Rafferty, Y. and Shinn, M.

Date: November 1991

Publication Information: *American Psychologist*, 46 (11), 1170-1179

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This seminal article summarizes the impact of homelessness on children and suggests implications for social and public policy. The authors draw on extensive research to establish a basis for understanding the complexity of adverse circumstances of homeless families, such as poverty, changes in residence, schools and services, loss of possessions, disruptions in social networks, and exposure to extreme hardships.

The research revealed the following consequences often associated with homelessness that pose serious threats to the well-being of homeless children:

- ***Health problems:*** poor prenatal care, low birth weight, elevated levels of acute and chronic health problems, such as upper respiratory infections, minor skin ailments, ear disorders, chronic physical disorders, infestational ailments, lack of immunization, elevated lead levels in the blood, iron deficiencies, and lack of adequate curative and preventative health services
- ***Hunger and poor nutrition:*** lack of food, lack of facilities for preparing and storing foods, lack of welfare benefits to obtain food
- ***Developmental delays:*** diminished cognitive ability, perception, speech, fine and gross motor skills; immature and inappropriate interpersonal interactions
- ***Psychological problems:*** depression, anxiety, behavioral problems
- ***Educational underachievement:*** poor performance on standardized tests, retention in grade, lack of access to schools and services, bureaucratic transition issues, poor facilities for studying

The authors emphasize that individual consequences of homelessness tend to compound one another, threatening to "seriously compromise the future of homeless children." They provide a summary of potential solutions with social policy implications in the areas of shelter facilities, permanent housing, adequate services without barriers to access, and stability and continuity in making their transitions and receiving services.

"Children of Poverty: The Status of 12 Million Young Americans"

Authors: Reed, S. and Sautter, R. C.

Date: June 1990

Publication Information: *Phi Delta Kappan,* 71 (10), K1-K12

Type of Publication: Special report

Summary: In this report, Reed and Sautter discuss at length statistical information on the incidence of poverty in children over the past two decades, the related political climate, and its impact on federal funding to combat poverty. Their research revealed that almost half of the children in poverty come from homes where at least one adult is working. However, the low wages paid to many of these adults do not even begin to cover the high cost of housing in the nation's most populated areas, such as Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

The report discusses ongoing issues related to children and poverty, such as homelessness, foster home placement, and available health care, and additional issues regarding the impact of poverty on schools. Programs such as Head Start and Chapter I/Title I are vital links in the support network for children in poverty. There is a growing trend toward providing comprehensive services in school settings that would benefit children and families in need of medical and social agency help. Several school reform projects, like the Comer Model and the Accelerated Schools Program, target increased parental involvement in an effort to make more meaningful connections between schools and communities.

The authors conclude that schools should become "social centers" in order for them to truly meet the needs of children in poverty, now and tomorrow.

"Building Resiliency: Constructive Directions for Homeless Education"

Authors: Reed-Victor, E. and Stronge, J. H.

Date: 1997

Publication Information: *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 3 (1), 67-91

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: Resilient individuals, "those who have the ability to spring back from adversity" in a "dynamic process of adaptation" (p. 72), have adult lives that include public school education, post-secondary education, employment, better parenting, and higher achievement for their children. This article discusses the factors resulting from homelessness that mitigate against developing such resiliency and strategies for building that resiliency in homeless children and their families.

The authors advocate building responsive schools for homeless students by designing effective intervention programs around protective mechanisms, which provide supports to resilience; individual factors (cognitive ability, sociability, autonomy, special interests, positive self-concept, age-appropriate sensorimotor, and perceptual skills); family factors (supportive, nurturing, positive role-modeling behavior of adults in the family/extended family); school factors (teacher behaviors, access to knowledge, development of problem-solving abilities, positive peer relationships, linkages to special services, avenues to further accomplishment through extra-curricular activities); and community factors (high-quality relationships with other adults, such as counselors, coaches, religious leaders, tutors). Suggestions for fostering resiliency include

- Building responsive school structures through proactive approaches, such as collaboration, structural modification, development of a continuum of services, and creation of transition supports
- Building supportive curricula that address multiple needs through multiple avenues
- Building family involvement by promoting family capability
- Building community within schools through coordination across faculty, staff, and services
- Building a "Tapestry of Programs" through collaboration with community agencies and individuals hallmarked by accessibility and effective linkages

"Ability, Achievement, and Adjustment in Homeless Children"

Authors: Rescoria, L.; Parker, R.; and Stolley, P.

Date: April, 1991

Publication Information: *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 61 (2), 210-220

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: Researchers in this study compared homeless children to housed children of lower economic status by using a variety of instruments to assess 83 shelter children and 45 children of housed families who used a free medical clinic in Philadelphia. The results of the study indicate that preschool-aged children in homeless families are more severely affected than those in housed low-income families in the following ways:

- Homeless preschool children exhibited more delay in language skills and visual-motor skills.
- Fewer shelter preschoolers were enrolled in any type of preschool educational program.
- Homeless preschoolers had higher rates of behavioral/emotional symptoms than did the children living in homes.

The results are less severe for the school-aged children in homeless families than for those in housed low-income families, with the following exceptions:

- The school-aged children in shelters scored lower on vocabulary skills than housed children.
- They scored higher in externalizing behaviors, such as aggression, disobedience, and destructiveness, than housed children.

One explanation offered for the differences between the effects of homelessness on preschoolers versus school-aged children is that the preschoolers had spent a greater proportion of their lives in homelessness. School attendance appears to have helped the older children by exposing them to educational stimulation, socialization, and predictable routines. Most of the preschool children were not enrolled in programs, so they were deprived of the social and educational benefits.

"Cognitive and Academic Functioning of Homeless Children Compared with Housed Children"

Authors: Rubin, D. H. and Erikson, C. J.

Date: March 1996

Publication Information: *Pediatrics*, 97 (3), 289-285

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article presents the results of a controlled study determining the effects of homelessness on cognitive and academic functioning of children, ages six to 11. Homeless children and their mothers living in shelters were compared with a housed group of children and their mothers selected from the homeless children's classroom in New York City between August 1990 and 1992. Researchers compared the groups using standardized cognitive and academic performance instruments.

The following assessments were conducted:

- Cognitive functioning
- Academic functioning
- Child depression
- Child anxiety
- Maternal depression
- Maternal anxiety

Results indicated that verbal intelligence and nonverbal intelligence were not significantly different between the two groups. However, academic achievement in the homeless children was significantly poorer. Differences in academic achievement were associated with number of school changes and grade repetition.

The findings of the study suggest that efforts should be directed toward providing a stable school environment for homeless children (while attempting to find permanent housing for homeless families). Service providers should encourage more school continuity and assistance in learning while children are in temporary housing environments. The results of the study also highlight maternal depression and length of homelessness as underlying mechanisms through which homelessness influences the academic achievement of children.

"What About America's Homeless Children? Hide and Seek"

Authors: Shane, P. G.

Date: 1996

Publication Information: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Type of Publication: Book

Summary: This book presents a comprehensive overview of homelessness among children in America. The first section of the book discusses the statistical and theoretical background of homeless children. In the second section, individual case studies provide poignant portraits of the reality of homelessness. The author illustrates the devastating effects of homelessness on children by profiling unaccompanied children, families, babies, and survivors. Included in each set of case studies is a discussion of common features among the stories. The third section provides a history and examples of various local/state/national agency responses in relation to each set of case studies. The final section of the book offers conclusions that focus on the situation, levels of prevention, research directions, and actions needed.

The author's recommendations for reducing homelessness include addressing prevention at the following three levels: (1) reducing poverty, increasing inadequate supplies of low-cost housing, and preserving and strengthening the family; (2) supporting early intervention and a wide range of services for both parents and children by establishing an integrated system of support with easy, universal access and aggressive outreach that addresses health needs, childcare, parenting support, drug and alcohol treatment, and support of family systems, such as foster care, small group homes, prenatal care, and artistic and creative activities for children; and (3) establishing outreach programs that provide intervention, accessibility, integration, comprehensiveness, and continuity of care.

"From Access to Success: Public Policy for Educating Urban Homeless Students"

Authors: Stronge, J. H.

Date: August 1993

Publication Information: *Education and Urban Society*, 25 (4), 340-360

Type of Publication Journal article

Summary: This article reviews policies and practices followed in public schools to ensure free and appropriate education for homeless children and youth. It reports data from a research study involving a national survey of states regarding homelessness and an in-depth case study in Chicago. Stronge analyzes specific state and local policies that address the accessibility and success of homeless children and youth in education in response to the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and its reauthorization in 1990. Stronge also assesses the impact of such policies and offers recommendations for change.

The author discusses several obstacles faced by homeless students in their access to schools and their success once enrolled. Access barriers include legal issues, such as student academic records, residency, the requirement for a guardian to be present during enrollment, and a need for medical records.

Barriers related to success of homeless children and youth in schools arise from problems with educational placement, support services, academic support, and social-emotional problems. A Chicago case study reports schools that have had moderate problems with educational placement and academic support. However, the schools had greater problems with support services and social-emotional support.

Policy recommendations are proposed to enhance educational opportunities for urban homeless children and youth. The author stresses not just access to school but also access to programs that promote success for homeless students once in school, such as a continuum of educational services and interagency collaboration.

"Emerging Service Delivery Models for Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Implications for Policy and Practice"

Authors: Stronge, J. H.

Date: December 1993

Publication Information: *Educational Policy*, 7 (4), 447-465

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: As an investigation into emerging educational programs for homeless children and youth, this article looks toward possible solutions to remove barriers to education for these homeless students. The author clarifies definitions of homelessness and discusses the problems homeless children and youth face, especially regarding their education.

Three primary models of service delivery are defined, described, and critiqued.

- Transitional programs provide educational opportunities to students temporarily displaced from their regular programs. Transitional programs are immediate and temporary and focus on social and support services.
- Mainstream programs educate homeless children and youth within existing schools and existing programs and keep the students mainstreamed with their classmates. Mainstream programs center on accessibility and academic accommodation.
- Supplemental support programs provide educational opportunities beyond school hours. The academic support addresses the student's schoolwork and provides supplemental work.

The article stresses the importance of educational access and equity for homeless children and youth. Recommendations for policies for the education of homeless students are offered, including providing for basic physical needs, establishing programs for social and emotional needs, providing support for parental involvement, conducting training for school personnel, and improving interagency collaboration.

"Educating Homeless Children: How Can We Help?"

Authors: Stronge, J. H.

Date: April 1995

Publication Information: *Journal for a Just and Caring Education,* 1 (2), 128-141

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article begins with a brief history of homelessness and a description of today's homeless children. Citing examples from successful programs, the article presents the following suggestions for providing educational services to homeless students:

- Start early. Target young children and provide developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.
- Enhance understanding of the needs of homeless students. Implement a public information campaign.
- Develop a continuum of educational services. Provide transitional programs with immediate interventions for those in temporary need. Provide mainstream programs for those requiring access to existing programs and academic accommodation of the available curricula and support services. Provide supplemental support programs for those in need of more than what in-class support can provide, including tutoring, counseling services, and support for parents.
- Expand educational services to include social support. Within the educational environment, provide for such needs as clothing, school supplies, food, parent and student counseling, and places to study.
- Collaborate with the schools. Coordinate the efforts between district and building levels and among schools within a district. Train administrators, teachers, and staff.
- Collaborate with other agencies. Develop successful partnerships with social service agencies and other service providers.
- Remember that homeless children are just children. Recognize and meet their special needs, but treat them like all other children.

The article concludes with a list of selected agencies that provide services related to homeless student education. A comprehensive list of references is also provided.

"Promising Practices for Educating Homeless Students"

Authors: Stronge, J. H. and Reed-Victor, E.

Date: 1999

Publication Information: Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education

Type of Publication: Book

Summary: Recent figures identified over 700,000 homeless school-age students and independent homeless youth in the United States. Teachers, principals, and other educators in all types of communities—urban, rural, and suburban—face daily challenges to provide access to appropriate educational programs for these students and to address the issues that threaten their success once they are in the programs.

This book presents a systematic treatment of the issues related to educating homeless children and youth, bridging current research and best practice. Written in a user-friendly style expressly for teachers, principals, and other practitioners, it provides a synthesis of promising practices for educating homeless students in these four areas:

- ***Focus on the child:*** birth through primary school, intermediate and middle school, and older youth
- ***Focus on the family:*** resiliency, family partnerships, and family learning
- ***Focus on the school:*** access; faculty, staff, and student awareness; and effective school programs
- ***Focus on the community:*** community advocacy, state and local collaboration, and university partnerships

More than a dozen leading researchers and practitioners with expertise in the area of educating homeless students contributed chapters to this book. Each chapter provides an introduction to the issues, a brief background, a question-answer format, and a list of additional resources. Across the areas listed above, issues addressed include insufficient low-cost housing, unemployment among selective population segments, poverty, reduction in social service programs, domestic violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, and health-related problems.

"Homeless Students, Heroic Students"

Authors: Vissing, Y. M.; Schroepfer, D.; and Bloise, F.

Date: March 1994

Publication Information: *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75 (7), 535-539

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: One does not normally equate homeless with heroic, yet the authors did just that in this study portraying a disadvantaged teenage couple who successfully struggled to defeat the homelessness which engulfed them. Strength to survive in the face of overwhelmingly negative circumstances led the authors to describe such students as heroic. This article focuses especially on homeless adolescents and offers the following recommendations for educators:

- ***Flexible admissions criteria:*** Devise procedures for admission without records, and work with adjacent school systems to ease attendance restrictions.
- ***Flexible attendance policies:*** Acknowledge the realities of distance, transportation problems, and other factors of homeless teens' struggles to make it, and encourage attendance through more realistic attendance and tardiness policies.
- ***Flexible course offerings:*** Devise alternative scheduling practices, such as mini-classes and segmented courses at different times of the day, enabling students to accumulate credits in smaller chunks before moving yet again.
- ***Flexible class assignments:*** Acknowledge that these students may not have resources to meet traditional homework assignments by providing acceptable alternatives.
- ***Special education services:*** Provide alternatives to meet needs caused by chronic medical conditions, developmental problems, and the realities of transience.
- ***Transportation:*** Create alternatives to overcome transportation barriers.
- ***Emotional support:*** Recognize the emotional impact of homelessness on these students, and prepare to meet their personal needs discreetly and sensitively.
- ***Development of community resources:*** Become savvy about available community resources, and develop partnerships to make services accessible.
- ***Equal treatment of all students:*** Recognize that homeless students' priorities may have to be ordered differently and that school may be their resource for coping.

"Homeless Children and Their Families: Delivery of Educational and Social Services Through School Systems"

Authors Wall, J. C.

Date July 1996

Publication Information: *Social Work in Education,* 18 (3), 135-145

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: School social workers perform essential roles and functions in addressing issues that prevent homeless children from receiving a quality education and essential social services. An acute understanding of these issues is essential for serving these children.

Homeless children suffer from a lack of continuity in their lives. Preoccupation with fundamental requirements for survival and feelings of loss and separation often compromise homeless children's critical developmental tasks, such as learning new skills, developing a sense of competence and mastery, and creating positive, ongoing adult or peer relationships. In addition, institutional obstacles, such as residency requirements for enrollment and lack of transportation between shelters and schools, often impede successful relationships between school systems and homeless families.

In spite of the obstacles that homeless children face in obtaining an education, schools continue to be ideal settings for developing and coordinating the array of educational and social services they require. School systems can serve as an important point of entry into necessary services. School social workers, trained in working with multiple systems and sensitized to the needs of homeless students, can play a critical role in coordinating services for homeless children. School social workers can

- Bring diverse groups of organizations together to plan the effective delivery of services
- Engage parents with the school system by developing positive relationships with them and helping them overcome obstacles that prevent easy access to education
- Work with teachers and support staff to ensure that homeless children receive appropriate educational services

"Children's Experiences of Homelessness: Implications for School Counselors"

Authors: Walsh, M. E. and Buckley, M. A.

Date: October 1994

Publication Information: *Elementary School Guidance Counseling*, 29 (1), 4-15

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This research article depicts a study of the impact of homelessness and explores the feelings and emotions of homeless children and youth. Although written primarily for counselors, the article would also be helpful for teachers.

The research generated quantitative statistical data on the effects of homelessness, as well as qualitative data on 55 homeless children from four to 18 years old, examining homelessness from the perspective of the student. The data included student perceptions of loss of security, havoc, fear from the school setting, and problems caused by constant moving, such as falling behind in schools with different curricula. Other problems mentioned related to shelter life, loss of self-esteem, and embarrassment.

The article suggests four types of counseling interventions to use with homeless students.

- ***Individual and group counseling:*** Counselors identify and devise strategies to meet the needs of individual homeless students or groups of homeless students. Small-group strategies include crisis-centered, problem-focused, and growth-centered approaches.
- ***Classroom guidance:*** School counselors help the school community (faculty, staff, and students) explore homelessness to create a safer, accepting environment. One effective strategy involves having classes share children's literature about homelessness.
- ***Consultation:*** Counselors build awareness of legal rights and legislation. They also coordinate communication among teachers, shelters, and other services.
- ***Coordination:*** Counselors ensure that all of the homeless students' basic needs are met (food, clothing, transportation, etc.) and that they are receiving an appropriate education.

"Volunteers in Programs for Homeless Children"

Authors: Ward, P.

Date: 1998

Publication Information: Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 111-126

Type of Publication: Chapter in *Preserving Childhood for Children in Shelters*, edited by Thelma Harms, Adele Richardson Ray, and Pam Rolandelli

Summary: The chapter entitled "Volunteers in Programs for Homeless Children" focuses entirely on homeless program volunteers. The author states that the chapter is not intended as a procedural guide for a volunteer program, but, rather, it offers background information and theories to help develop a program. The research cited is based on interviews with shelters and childcare programs that use volunteers. Ideas on volunteerism, recruiting, and connections reflect those of the National Council of Jewish Women.

The chapter provides information on how to recruit, train, supervise, and evaluate volunteers. To recruit volunteers, shelters should use advertising, word-of-mouth, references from other volunteer organizations, volunteer clearinghouses, university and college programs, and employer-supported volunteer initiatives. Training mentioned should involve program and policy orientation, child development theories, an explanation of the lives and issues homeless children and youth encounter, and on-the-job training. Supervision and evaluation of volunteers should incorporate regular feedback, staff meetings, and recorded comments from parents, community partners, and other volunteers.

The chapter defines volunteerism. It also provides ideas on handbooks, registration, interviewing, risk management and program liability, and guidelines for shelters and for mediating volunteers' expectations. It emphasizes that good management of volunteers, including support resources for them, can greatly assist any shelter in providing needed childcare and education for homeless children and youth.

"Dueling Legislation: The Impact of Incongruent Federal Statutes on Homeless and Other Special-Needs Children"

Authors: Williams, B. T. and DeSander, M. K.

Date: January 1999

Publication Information: *Journal for a Just and Caring Education,* 5 (1), 34-50

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: Education has become more complex in a more complex world, with greater public concern, heightened professional debate, and increasing diversity, dramatically increasing government involvement in education. In this article, the authors

- Profile historically unserved/underserved student populations
- Review the federal role in education
- Describe the current functions of the U.S. Department of Education
- Analyze points of incongruence between specific federal statutes targeting underserved children and youth and their families

Three major functions of the U.S. Department of Education include the following: providing national leadership and partnership in addressing critical issues; assisting local communities and schools in meeting students' critical needs; and ensuring nondiscriminatory practices in use of federal funding. Federal action has facilitated these functions through major legislation, including the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 (Title I), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Case law, emerging from growing litigation, has become key to supplementing statutory law, providing guidance and direction in meeting these responsibilities and overcoming barriers to service delivery for needy populations.

Each of these laws focuses on particular segments of at-risk student populations: the homeless, the poor, the disabled, and those with "minority" status. Incongruities and legislative conflict have emerged between and among provisions under the various laws, such as in confidentiality, eligibility, residency, due process, discipline, funding, transportation, and records. This article provides specific examples of these problems and the resulting legislative barriers to educational opportunity for the affected student populations.

"Hope for Homeless Students"

Authors: Woods, C. J.

Date: November 1996

Publication Information: *Educational Leadership,* 54 (3) 58-60

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article reports a case study of the Thomas J. Pappas Regional Education Center in Phoenix, Arizona, and its work with volunteer mentors for local homeless children and youth. The article describes a successful mentoring program for homeless students. The volunteer mentors—all from the local utility company (Salt River Project)—donated two hours per month to work one-on-one with homeless students. The students—from local shelters and other temporary living situations—attended the Thomas J. Pappas Regional Education Center, which is a magnet school for homeless students in Phoenix.

When the program began, few expectations were identified because of the special needs of the homeless students and questions about the relationships between the students and volunteers that would develop. Volunteer training warned that homeless children and youth can be aggressive, restless, depressed, hyperactive, anxious, regressive, learning-disabled, and lacking adequate parent role models. Despite these potential barriers, the students' need for someone to protect and nurture them resulted in emotional bonds with the mentors.

The program benefited both the students and mentors. Progress reported includes the following:

- The volunteer-student relationships were a great success. Strong bonds developed between many of the volunteer mentors and students.
- When the mentors brought the students in for a day at work, many students learned new work and social skills. This event inspired some students to develop goals and gave them new drives for the future.
- The mentors became role models who helped the students gain social skills and encouraged them to work for brighter futures and jobs.

"Homeless Parents and the Education of Their Children"

Authors: Yon, M. G. and Sebastie-Kadie, M.

Date: 1994

Publication Information: *The School Community Journal*, 4 (2), 67-77

Type of Publication: Journal article

Summary: This article describes a study of the experiences and perceptions of homeless parents regarding the education of their children. It outlines barriers to schooling that homeless parents and children encounter and provisions of the Stewart B. McKinney Act. A Child's Place, an interagency model for transitioning homeless children into a school-based classroom in Charlotte, North Carolina, is described in detail. This center provides not only regular education but also social and medical services for elementary students and their families. It also serves as a staff development resource for all educational personnel in the local school district. The researchers interviewed 27 homeless parents of children receiving educational services at A Child's Place. Most were female African-American single parents who were homeless for the first time. The authors identified the following four themes from the interviews:

- The importance of education and schooling for their children
- Necessary negotiation of perceived barriers to continuity and stability (transportation and school reassignment policies)
- Perceived barriers to admission of homeless students into a regular school setting
- Overall parent satisfaction with educational services at the center

Conclusions related to those themes included the following:

- Perceptions and experiences of parents in this study were atypical of those in other reports. Other parents have been generally satisfied with the educational services their children were receiving.
- Some problems still exist regarding accessibility to regular schooling for homeless students.
- Few programs for adolescents meet the needs of older independent students.
- An ongoing need exists to inform homeless parents of legal responsibilities of schools.

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SECTION FOUR

Legislation: The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

Subtitle VII-B (Sections 721-726) as amended 1994

SEC. 323. Education for Homeless Children and Youth.

Subtitle B of title VII of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

Subtitle B–Education for Homeless Children and Youth

SEC. 721. Statement of Policy.

It is the policy of the Congress that–

(1) each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth;

(2) in any State that has a compulsory residency requirement as a component of the State's compulsory school attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth;

(3) homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment; and

(4) homeless children and youth should have access to the education and other services that such children and youth need to ensure that such children and youth have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student performance standards to which all students are held.

SEC. 722. Grants for State and Local Activities for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) **General Authority.**–The Secretary is authorized to make grants to States in accordance with the provisions of this section to enable such States to carry out the activities described in subsections (d), (e), (f), and (g).

(b) **Application.**–No State may receive a grant under this section unless the State educational agency submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(c) **Allocation and Reservations.–**

(1) **In general.**–Subject to paragraph (2) and section 724(c), from the amounts appropriated for each fiscal year under section 726, the Secretary is authorized to allot to each State an amount that bears the same ratio to the amount appropriated for such year under section 726 as the amount allocated under section 1122 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to the State for that year bears to the total amount allocated under section 1122 to all States for that year, except that no State shall receive less than $100,000.

(2) **Reservation.–**

(A) The Secretary is authorized to reserve 0.1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year under section 726 to be allocated by the Secretary among the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau (until the effective date of the Compact of Free Association with the Government of Palau), according to their respective need for assistance under this subtitle, as determined by the Secretary.

(B) (i) The Secretary is authorized to transfer one percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year under section 726 to the Department of the Interior for programs for Indian students served by schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior, as determined under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, that are consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(ii) The Secretary and the Secretary of the Interior shall enter into an agreement, consistent with the requirements of this part, for thedistribution and use of the funds described in clause (i) under terms that the Secretary determines best meet the purposes of the programsdescribed in such clause. Such agreement shall set forth the plans of the Secretary of the Interior for the use of the amounts transferred, including appropriate goals, objectives, and milestones.

(3) **Definition.**–As used in this subsection, the term 'State' shall not include the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Palau.

(d) **Activities.**–Grants under this section shall be used–

(1) to carry out the policies set forth in section 721 in the State;

(2) to provide activities for, and services to, homeless children, including preschool-aged children, and homeless youth that enable such children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school, or, if appropriate, in preschool programs;

(3) to establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth in the State educational agency in accordance with subsection (f);

(4) to prepare and carry out the State plan described in subsection (g); and

(5) to develop and implement professional development programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of, and capacity to respond to, specific problems in the education of homeless children and youth.

(e) **State and Local Grants.–**

(1) **In general.–**

(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), if the amount allotted to the State educational agency for any fiscal year under this subtitle exceeds the amount such agency received for fiscal year 1990 under this subtitle, such agency shall provide grants tolocal educational agencies for purposes of section 723.

(B) The State educational agency may reserve not more than the greater of 5 percent of the amount such agency receives under this subtitle for any fiscal year, or the amount such agency received under this subtitle for fiscal year 1990, to conduct activities under subsection (f) directly or through grants or contracts.

(2) **Special rule.**–If the amount allotted to a State educational agency for any fiscal year under this subtitle is less than the amount such agency received for fiscal year 1990 under this subtitle, such agency, at such agency's discretion, may provide grants to local educational agencies in accordance with section 723 or may conduct activities under subsection (f) directly or through grants or contracts.

(f) Functions of the Office of Coordinator.–The Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth established in each State shall–

(1) estimate the number of homeless children and youth in the State and the number of such children and youth served with assistance provided under the grants or contracts under this subtitle;

(2) gather, to the extent possible, reliable, valid, and comprehensive information on the nature and extent of the problems homeless children and youth have in gaining access to public preschool programs and to public elementary and secondary schools, the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children and youth, any progress made by the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State in addressing such problems and difficulties, and the success of the program under this subtitle in allowing homeless children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in, school;

(3) develop and carry out the State plan described in subsection (g);

(4) prepare and submit to the Secretary not later than October 1, 1997, and on October 1 of every third year thereafter, a report on the information gathered pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) and such additional information as the Secretary may require to carry out the Secretary's responsibilities under this subtitle;

(5) facilitate coordination between the State educational agency, the State social services agency, and other agencies providing services to homeless children and youth, including homeless children and youth who are preschool age, and families of such children and youth; and

(6) develop relationships and coordinate with other relevant education, child development, or preschool programs and providers of services to homeless children, homeless families, and runaway and homeless youth (including domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youth), to improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and youth and their families.

(g) **State Plan.–**

(1) **In general.**–Each State shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youth within the State, which plan shall describe how such children and youth are or will be given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State student performance standards all students are expected to meet, shall describe the procedures the State educational agency will use to identify such children and youth in the State and to assess their special needs, and shall–

(A) describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth;

(B) describe programs for school personnel (including principals, attendance officers, teachers and enrollment personnel), to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth;

(C) describe procedures that ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs;

(D) describe procedures that ensure that–

(i) homeless children have equal access to the same public preschool programs, administered by the State agency, as provided to other children; and

(ii) homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local before- and after-school care programs;

(E) address problems set forth in the report provided to the Secretary under subsection (f)(4);

(F) address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including problems caused by–

(i) transportation issues; and

(ii) enrollment delays that are caused by–

(I) immunization requirements;

(II) residency requirements;

(III) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; or

(IV) guardianship issues;

(G) demonstrate that the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State have developed, and will review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State; and

(H) contain an assurance that the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not isolated or stigmatized.

(2) **Compliance.**–Each plan adopted under this subsection shall also show how the State will ensure that local educational agencies in the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (9).

(3) **Local educational agency requirements.**–

(A) The local educational agency of each homeless child and youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest, either–

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin–

(I) for the remainder of the academic year; or

(II) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, for the following academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

(B) In determining the best interests of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall comply, to the extent feasible, with the request made by a parent or guardian regarding school selection.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'school of origin' means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

(D) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

(4) **Comparable services.**–Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including–

(A) transportation services;

(B) educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited-English proficiency;

(C) programs in vocational education;

(D) programs for gifted and talented students; and

(E) school meals programs.

(5) **Records.**–Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of

each homeless child or youth shall be maintained–

(A) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(B) in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act.

(6) **Coordination.**–Each local educational agency serving homeless children and youth that receives assistance under this subtitle shall coordinate with local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

(7) **Liaison.**–

(A) Each local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that–

(i) homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in the schools of that agency; and

(ii) homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which such families, children, and youth are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the local educational agency, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

(B) State coordinators and local educational agencies shall inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaisons.

(8) **Review and revisions.**–Each State educational agency and local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraph (3). In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youth who are not currently attending school.

(9) **Coordination.**–Where applicable, each State and local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall coordinate with State and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy described in section 105 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act to minimize educational disruption for children who become homeless.

SEC. 723. Local Educational Agency Grants for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) **General Authority.**–

(1) **In general.**–The State educational agency shall, in accordance with section 722(e) and from amounts made available to such agency under section 726, make grants to local educational agencies for the purpose of facilitating the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth.

(2) **Services.**–Unless otherwise specified, services under paragraph (1) may be provided through programs on school grounds or at other facilities. Where such services are provided through programs to homeless students on school grounds, schools may provide services to other children and youth who are determined by the local educational agency to be at risk of failing in, or dropping out of, schools, in the same setting or classroom. To the maximum extent practicable, such services shall be provided through exist-

ing programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless individuals with nonhomeless individuals.

(3) Requirement.—Services provided under this section shall not replace the regular academic program and shall be designed to expand upon or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program.

(b) **Application.**—A local educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the State educational agency may reasonably require according to guidelines issued by the Secretary. Each such application shall include—

(1) a description of the services and programs for which assistance is sought and the problems to be addressed through the provision of such services and programs;

(2) an assurance that the local educational agency's combined fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of that agency and the State with respect to the provision of free public education by such agency for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made was not less than 90 percent of such combined fiscal effort or aggregate expenditures for the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

(3) an assurance that the applicant complies with, or will use requested funds to come into compliance with, paragraphs (3) through (9) of section 722(g); and

(4) a description of policies and procedures that the agency will implement to ensure that activities carried out by the agency will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youth.

(c) **Awards.**—

(1) **In general.**—The State educational agency shall, in accordance with section 722(g) and from amounts made available to such agency under section 726, award grants under this section to local educational agencies submitting an application under subsection (b) on the basis of the need of such agencies.

(2) **Need.**—In determining need under paragraph (1), the State educational agency may consider the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools within the area served by the agency, and shall consider the needs of such children and youth and the ability of the agency to meet such needs. Such agency may also consider—

(A) the extent to which the proposed use of funds would facilitate the enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth;

(B) the extent to which the application reflects coordination with other local and State agencies that serve homeless children and youth, as well as the State plan required by section 722(g);

(C) the extent to which the applicant exhibits in the application and in current practice a commitment to education for all homeless children and youth; and

(D) such other criteria as the agency determines appropriate.

(3) **Duration of grants.**—Grants awarded under this section shall be for terms not to exceed three years.

(d) **Authorized Activities.**—A local educational agency may use funds awarded under this section for activities to carry out the purpose of this subtitle, including—

(1) the provision of tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services that are linked to the achievement of the same challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards the State establishes for other children or youth;

(2) the provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youth, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (such as educational programs for gifted and talented students, children with disabilities, and students with limited-English proficiency, services provided under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, programs in vocational education, and school meals programs);

(3) professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, the rights of such children and youth under this Act, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youth;

(4) the provision of referral services to homeless children and youth for medical, dental, mental, and other health services;

(5) the provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students pursuant to section 722(g)(4), not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under section 722(g)(3);

(6) the provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, for preschool-aged children;

(7) the provision of before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs for homeless children and youth in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities;

(8) where necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youth in school, including birth certificates, immunization records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services;

(9) the provision of education and training to the parents of homeless children and youth about the rights of, and resources available to, such children and youth;

(10) the development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youth, including programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act;

(11) the provision of pupil services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services;

(12) activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youth that may arise from domestic violence;

(13) the adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for nonschool facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) to provide services under this subsection;

(14) the provision of school supplies, including those supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations; and

(15) the provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children and youth to attend school.

SEC. 724. Secretarial Responsibilities.

(a) **Review of Plans.**—In reviewing the State plans submitted by the State educational agencies under section 722(g), the Secretary shall use a peer review process and shall evaluate whether State laws, policies, and practices described in such plans adequately address the problems of homeless children and youth relating to access to education and placement as described in such plans.

(b) **Technical Assistance.**—The Secretary shall provide support and technical assistance to the State educational agencies to assist such

agencies to carry out their responsibilities under this subtitle.

(c) **Evaluation and Dissemination.**—The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students, and may use funds appropriated under section 726 to conduct such activities.

(d) **Submission and Distribution.**—The Secretary shall require applications for grants under this subtitle to be submitted to the Secretary not later than the expiration of the 60-day period beginning on the date that funds are available for purposes of making such grants and shall make such grants not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on such date.

(e) **Determination by Secretary.**—The Secretary, based on the information received from the States and information gathered by the Secretary under subsection (d), shall determine the extent to which State educational agencies are ensuring that each homeless child and homeless youth has access to a free appropriate public education as described in section 721(1).

(f) **Reports.**—The Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate on the programs and activities authorized by this subtitle by December 31, 1997, and every third year thereafter.

SEC. 725. Definitions.

For the purpose of this subtitle, unless otherwise stated—

(1) the term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Education; and

(2) the term 'State' means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

SEC. 726. Authorization of Appropriations.

For the purpose of carrying out this subtitle, there are authorized to be appropriated $30,000,000 for fiscal year 1995 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999.

About SERVE

SERVE is an education organization with the mission to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. To further this mission, SERVE engages in research and development that address education issues of critical importance to educators in the region and provides technical assistance to SEAs and LEAs that are striving for comprehensive school improvement. This critical research-to-practice linkage is supported by an experienced staff strategically located throughout the region. This staff is highly skilled in providing needs assessment services, conducting applied research in schools, and developing processes, products, and programs that inform educators and increase student achievement.

As the new millennium approaches, SERVE is preparing to address emerging 21st-century issues, such as persistent achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students, massive teacher training needs, rising numbers of limited English proficient students. Committed to a shared vision of the future of education in the region, the SERVE organization is governed by a board of directors that includes the governors, chief state school officers, and key legislators from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and representative teachers and private sector leaders. SERVE's core component is the Regional Educational Laboratory program. SERVE is one of ten organizations, funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, that provide the services of the Regional Educational Laboratory program to all 50 states and territories. These Laboratories form a knowledge network, building a bank of information and resources shared nationally and disseminated regionally to improve student achievement locally. SERVE has additional funding from the Department in the areas of Migrant Education and School Leadership and is the lead agency in the Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortium for the Southeast and the Southeast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium.

Based on these funded efforts, SERVE has developed a portfolio of programs and initiatives that provides a spectrum of resources, services, and products for responding to local, regional, and national needs. Program areas include

- Assessment, Accountability, and Standards
- Children, Families, and Communities
- Education Policy
- Improvement of Science and Mathematics Education
- The Initiative on Teachers and Teaching
- School Development and Reform
- Technology in Learning

SERVE's National Speciality Area is Early Childhood Education, and the staff of SERVE's Program for Children, Families, and Communities has developed the expertise and the ability to provide leadership and support to the early childhood community nationwide for children from birth to age eight.

In addition to the program areas, the SERVE Evaluation Department supports the evaluation activities of the major grants and contracts and provides evaluation services to SEAs and LEAs in the region. Through its Publishing and Quality Assurance Department, SERVE publishes a variety of studies, training materials, policy briefs, and program products. These informative and low-cost publications include guides to available resources, summaries of current issues in education policy, and examples of exemplary educational programs. Through its programmatic, evaluation, and publishing activities, SERVE also provides contracted staff development and technical assistance in many areas of expertise to assist education agencies in achieving their school improvement goals.

SERVE's main office is at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with major staff groups located in Tallahassee, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia. Policy advisors are assigned to each state department of education in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Current and detailed information on any of the program and service areas noted here may be found on SERVE's site on the World Wide Web at **www.serve.org**.

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